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Critique and Power

Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate

edited and with an introduction by
Michael Kelly

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Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate

edited by Michael Kelly

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Jürgen Habermas's "The Critique of Reason as an Unmasking of the Human Sciences: Michel Foucault" and "Some Questions Concerning the Theory of Power: Foucault Again" were originally chapters 9 and 10 of his *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987). And "Taking Aim at the Heart of the Present" appeared in his *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historians' Debate*, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989).

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Richard Bernstein's "Foucault: Critique as a Philosophic Ethos" first appeared in *Philosophical Interventions in the Unfinished Project of Enlightenment*, ed. Axel Honneth, Thomas McCarthy, Claus Offe, and Albrecht Wellmer, trans. William Rehg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992); it is also chapter 5 of his *The New Constellation: The Ethical-Political Horizons of Modernity/Postmodernity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992).

Thomas McCarthy's "The Critique of Impure Reason: Foucault and the Frankfurt School" first appeared in *Political Theory* 18 (1990): 437–469; and later as chapter 2 of his *Ideals and Illlusions: On Reconstruction and Deconstruction in Contemporary Critical Theory* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991).

Gilles Deleuze's "Foldings, or the Inside of Thought (Subjectivation)" is chapter 5 of his *Foucault*, trans. Paul Bové (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

Jana Sawicki's "Foucault and Feminism: A Critical Reappraisal" appeared as chapter 5 of her *Disciplining Foucault: Feminism, Power, and the Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991).

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1

Introduction

Michael Kelly

I am interested in what Habermas is doing. I know that he does not agree with what I say — I am a little more in agreement with him — . . .

— *Foucault*

I can only relate what impressed me [about Foucault]: the tension . . . between the almost serene scientific reserve of the scholar striving for objectivity on the one hand, and, on the other, the political vitality of the vulnerable, subjectively excitable, morally sensitive intellectual.

— *Habermas*

I

Michel Foucault is credited with welcoming the concept of power into the contemporary philosophical landscape. Jürgen Habermas is critical of Foucault for doing so, not because power is incongruous in that landscape, but because Foucault's conception of it inflicts environmental damage for which he can be held philosophically accountable.

Foucault introduces power while analyzing the genealogy of various forms of knowledge and nondiscursive practices; he claims that power is, in fact, productive of both knowledge and practice. While acknowledging power, Habermas insists that it be tempered by a critical theory able to make normative distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate uses of power. To make such distinctions, he introduces a theory of communicative action within which the idealizing presuppositions of discourse are identified and justified through what

he calls "discourse ethics." Foucault challenges not so much the presence of such presuppositions as Habermas's attempts to establish them as unavoidable universals. Arguing instead for a form of local rather than global critique, Foucault defiantly practices genealogy and critique without universal norms, and from within a discourse demarcated by the axes of knowledge and self as well as power.

Which paradigm of critique — Foucault's or Habermas's — is most defensible philosophically and most effective practically, especially in relation to the role of power in the contemporary philosophical landscape? To answer this question is to take a position on the ways in which power affects the presuppositions and consequences of the practice of critique. It is also to situate philosophical discourse with respect to critique and power. Is it what links the two, as in Foucault's case, where power itself is discursive and critique is just one of many discursive practices tied to power? If so, then it would seem, to Habermas at least, that power undermines the rational basis and practical efficacy of critique. Or does philosophical discourse ideally separate critique and power, as in Habermas's case, where the role of critique is to hold power in abeyance and then to justify the universal norms pragmatically presupposed in ethical, political, and social theory? If so, discourse and power are autonomous realms, something which Foucault would deny since he does not think there is a power-free discourse with which to conduct critique.

These issues and questions are important not only for interpretations of Foucault and Habermas but also for ethical, political, and social theory insofar as they have been shaped over the last twenty years — in France, England, and Germany, and to an increasing degree in the United States — by variations on the Foucaultian and Habermasian paradigms of critique developed in response to the problematic of power. Hence the theme of the present volume: critique and power in the context of the Foucault/Habermas debate.

II

Formal debate between Foucault and Habermas never took place nor did an American conference proposed in the early 1980s to allow them to air their differences in the public sphere. One major reason

why neither event materialized was, of course, Foucault's untimely death. But the more philosophical reason was that the two principals could not agree on a topic for the conference which would have set the stage for their debate.

Their different versions of the proposed debate reflect their substantive disagreements. According to Foucault, a conference was suggested by Americans on the topic of modernity. But he claimed not to understand what problem(s) the term *modernity* represented, since in relation to it he was presumed to be either a postmodernist or antimodernist and he did not regard himself as either one.[1] Rather, he saw himself as a modernist, where modernism is understood as more of an attitude than a historical period, as "a permanent critique of our historical era" in the pursuit of enlightenment.[2] Habermas has a different account, saying that it was Foucault who proposed the conference and with a very specific topic in mind: Kant's "What is Enlightenment?" essay.[3] Habermas assumed that Foucault would argue that modernity — which Habermas defines in terms of its ability "to create its normativity out of itself" — should be abandoned rather than completed.[4] Once he read Foucault's interpretation of Kant, however, he was surprised to see Foucault align himself with the philosophical tradition of modernity, thereby seeming to sabotage the pending debate by eliminating the disagreement that would have been its raison d'être.

Foucault's alignment with Kant should not have been such a surprise, however, since he had discussed him in a positive light on several previous occasions.[5] Moreover, by clarifying his position vis-à-vis Kant and modernity, Foucault identified both the topic of the debate — namely, the ethos and norms of modernity — and the stakes — namely, the philosophical notion of critique. Such clarification was necessary if the debate was ever to take place, for it served as a common understanding on the basis of which their philosophical *dis*agreements about modernity and critique could be articulated more clearly in relation to the problematic of power.

One fundamental point of agreement did surface as Foucault and Habermas tried to establish the terms of their debate. They both rejected, as do many philosophers today, the Kantian paradigm of critique grounded in the notion of a transcendental, self-constituting

(theoretical and practical) subject which had been perpetuated by phenomenologists (e.g., Edmund Husserl) and taken over in the form of the philosophy of history by Marxists (e.g., Jean-Paul Sartre).[5] The rejection of that paradigm is distinctive of philosophers in the late twentieth century; but it is at the same time a contributing factor to a potential impasse that threatens to undermine the philosophical discourse(s) of modernity. The impasse is that modernists today still have not agreed on a paradigm of critique to replace the one that was abandoned; until and unless they can agree, they may not be able to sustain the critical self-reflection that Foucault and Habermas recognize as central to modernity's philosophical identity.[6]

III

The present volume implicitly addresses this impasse while analyzing the Foucault/Habermas debate. The first step of this process is to retrace the initial rounds of the debate in order to set the stage for a recasting of its procedural terms; only after such a recasting has been accomplished can we carry out with greater clarity today a philosophical debate about critique, power, and modernity.

The debate needs to be "recast" for a number of overlapping reasons. First, the terms of the earlier, truncated debate were unclear, as we have seen. Second, insofar as the debate did take place, the amount of discussion by each philosopher about the other was unintentionally lopsided in Habermas's favor. He devoted two chapters of *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* to Foucault, but the book was published after Foucault's death and thus received no reply. Third, the effect of this lopsidedness has been that the debate is too often construed in Habermasian terms.[8] Foucault is expected to satisfy Habermas's demand for a normative justification of critique, while too little attention is given either to whether such justification (at least as Habermas understands it) is really needed in order to practice critique, or to how Habermas's critical theory may need to be altered in the light of Foucault's notion of power.[9] Fourth, the unclarity and lopsidedness are compounded by the fact that Habermas's critique of Foucault is directed at his writings up through the late 1970s, whereas responses to Habermas made on Foucault's behalf are from the perspective of his writings of the 1980s.[10] Fifth,

unfortunately but not surprisingly, the trail of literature on this debate since Foucault died is marked by these same characteristics.[11] Sixth, much of the literature in English on Foucault vis-à-vis the Foucault/Habermas debate is written by people who are to varying degrees Heideggerian in their philosophical commitments.[12] While legitimate in its own right, I think the Heideggerian interpretation of Foucault has made it difficult to understand his debate with Habermas, because Heidegger was not concerned with critique or power. Moreover, since Heidegger virtually denounced modernity, it is hard to defend Foucault against Habermas's charge that he is an antimodernist by invoking Heideggerian notions.[13]

IV

Part I of this volume is comprised of segments of the debate between Foucault and Habermas insofar as it was implicitly or explicitly carried out. The first piece is "Two Lectures," which Foucault delivered at the Collège de France in 1976. These lectures are particularly relevant here because they illuminate Foucault's distinction between juridical and disciplinary power, his notion of local critique, and the genealogical method he uses to analyze power. Power and its normative consequences for critical theory is the focus of Habermas's critique of Foucault in two chapters of *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity,* "The Critique of Reason as an Unmasking of the Human Sciences: Michel Foucault" and "Some Questions Concerning the Theory of Power: Foucault Again," which constitute the second and third readings. Habermas argues that Foucault's paradigm of critique is self-refuting because of his theory of power: if critique itself is a form of power, then either it cannot be used to criticize power or if it is used it undermines itself. This discussion is followed by two texts from Foucault's late writings, "Critical Theory/Intellectual History" and "The Art of Telling the Truth," where he interprets his work in relation to Kant, explaining the sense in which it is both critical and modernist. The final contribution of part I is Habermas's "Taking Aim at the Heart of the Present," written on the occasion of Foucault's death. Although he acknowledges the importance of Foucault's empirical analyses of society, Habermas concludes that the

critique of power still undermines the analytic of truth by which it is normatively justified.

V

The Foucault/Habermas material is followed in part II by articles by Axel Honneth, Nancy Fraser, Richard Bernstein, Thomas McCarthy, James Schmidt and Thomas Wartenberg, Gilles Deleuze, Jana Sawicki, and myself. Written over the last eight years and marking different stages of the followup to the initial exchanges, these articles sustain the will to debate exhibited by Foucault and Habermas. While the first four develop the critique of Foucault with both increasingly more appreciation of his strengths and subtler arguments against his weaknesses, the second four defend Foucault's positions on critique and power by arguing that his critique is indeed justified, though not in the way that Habermas thinks it must be.

More specifically, Honneth, in "Foucault's Theory of Society: A Systems-Theoretic Dissolution of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*," interprets Foucault as a systems theorist whose "quintessence" is linked to the Frankfurt school's analysis of the dialectic of the Enlightenment. Focusing on Foucault's theory of power and genealogical method in *Discipline and Punish,* he criticizes Foucault for presupposing that the history of society is a process of the augmentation of social power. According to Honneth, Foucault does not defend the presupposition, and he cannot do so because of his avowal elsewhere of a radical historicism; yet he needs it in order to account for the birth of the prison. Foucault is thus faced with a serious dilemma which he does not escape in *Discipline and Punish,* making his social theory in general untenable.[14]

Is Foucault a "Young Conservative," an antimodernist engaged in a total critique of modernity which is "both theoretically paradoxical and politically suspect"?[15] In analyzing Habermas's charge against Foucault, Fraser underscores that the dispute between them concerns their conflicting assessments of the project of modernity: Should it be abandoned or completed? But she also points out that this is a false dichotomy, because it is dependent on Habermas's misunderstanding of Foucault as a critic of modernity *simpliciter*

rather than as a critic of humanism, which is only one form of modernity. The result of Habermas's misunderstanding is that he "forecloses the possibility of posing to Foucault a more nuanced and analytically precise set of questions." Fraser adds, however, that while Habermas can be criticized for not asking those questions, Foucault can in turn be faulted for failing to answer them. The substance and tone of Fraser's "Michel Foucault: A 'Young Conservative?' " are set by this last claim. In the end, she argues that although Foucault is not a "Young Conservative," he does not succeed "in demonstrating the superiority of [his] rejectionist over [Habermas's] dialectical criticism of modern societies."

In "Foucault: Critique as a Philosophic Ethos," Bernstein addresses Foucault's charge that Habermas tried to subject him to "Enlightenment Blackmail" by forcing a normative grid on his critical project. He analyzes Foucault's "What Is Enlightenment?" essay, which he reads as an apologia in two senses: it is both Foucault's defense of his critical project and an oblique response to his critics. Bernstein asks whether Foucault's notion of the ethos of the Enlightenment offers a new genre of critique, one that does not appeal implicitly or explicitly to any normative justification. After providing a concise statement of this ethos, he (a) discusses several types of criticism of Foucault, (b) defends Foucault against them by exploring five themes in his writings which may be interpreted as responses to them, but then (c) introduces similar criticisms of Foucault related to the same themes but now immanent to his own critical project.

After enumerating six points of comparison between Foucault and the Frankfurt school, McCarthy discusses six points of disagreement and criticizes Foucault from Habermas's point of view. In doing so, McCarthy aims in "The Critique of Impure Reason: Foucault and the Frankfurt School" to be constructive rather than dismissive. For example, he proposes to shift the orientation in the analysis of power from ontology to social theory in order to retain Foucault's insights into power relations while cutting the losses McCarthy feels he incurred by ontologizing the concept of power. The main loss is Foucault's inability to justify normative distinctions that appear at the heart of critical social analysis. In the end, after taking Foucault's late works into account, McCarthy suggests that Foucault's historical-crit-

ical studies are better understood as a continuation and enrichment of the critical-theoretical tradition than as the antithesis of it.

VI

One of the general difficulties of the Foucault/Habermas debate is that philosophers cannot agree on what Foucault was up to, especially given the changes in his methodology marked by *Discipline and Punish* and again by *The Use of Pleasure*. Not knowing which Foucault to target makes it hard to criticize him and, in turn, to respond to any criticism. One thing on which most parties agree is that Foucault's interpretation of Kant is problematic: Is the "What Is Enlightenment?" essay a concession speech in which Foucault "came, at the end, to question the coherence of his earlier work"? Is it a "last quick change of masks by the master of the ironic gesture"? Or is it rather the normative account of his critical theory which critics thought he was philosophically incapable of providing? These are the possibilities which Schmidt and Wartenberg pose in "Foucault's Enlightenment: Critique, Revolution, and the Fashioning of the Self" before analyzing Foucault's three different articles on Kant's essay on the Enlightenment. They argue that Foucault's Kant interpretation is not a concession or a mask, but "a remarkably productive interrogation of a thinker who never ceased to inspire and provoke Foucault. And as such, it deserves to be scrutinized more carefully than has typically been the case."[16]

In "Foldings, or the Inside of Thought (Subjectivation)," Deleuze interprets Foucault's early and late works as a critical continuum, placing the notion of power in *Discipline and Punish* in the light of the relevance of *The History of Sexuality* to Foucault's overall critical project. He thereby challenges Habermas's interpretation of Foucault, though without discussing the Foucault/Habermas debate explicitly. At the same time, Deleuze also emphasizes (a) Foucault's indebtedness to Nietzsche,[17] which is in Habermas's eyes the root of Foucault's "impasse" concerning power,[18] and (b) his distance from Heidegger.[19] The discussion of the link to Nietzsche helps to clarify the sense in which Foucault's account of power is not an idea of totalizing power, which Deleuze argues is falsely attributed to Nietzsche in the first place. The critical, if brief, comments about

Heidegger are significant because when Foucault is linked too strongly to Heidegger, whether early or late, his relevance for the understanding of the notion of critique in ethical, political, and social theory may be reduced accordingly.

Feminist appropriations of Foucault based on his theoretical insights and his practical commitments have been pathbreaking and provocative. But, as Sawicki explains in "Foucault and Feminism: A Critical Appraisal," some feminists have worries that are not unlike Habermas's: Foucault's notion of the subject as an effect of power may threaten feminist agency; he seems to offer no normative stance from which to engage in feminist critique; the analysis of the microphysics of power could itself be oppressive without a theory of domination to establish a basis for political judgments about power relations, in particular as they affect women; finally, his discourse may be too relativistic, nihilistic, and pessimistic to serve as a basis for feminist politics. Sawicki selectively defends aspects of Foucault's discourse she finds useful for feminist critique (e.g., genealogy), while elaborating on other aspects he did not develop sufficiently (e.g., concerning resistance), and de-emphasizing others she finds undesirable (e.g., the totalistic rhetoric of decline). She thus provides a reflective response to Habermasian methodological criticisms of Foucault in the specific context of the feminist appropriation of his paradigm of local critique.[20]

Finally, focusing on Habermas's three charges against Foucault — "presentism," "relativism," and "cryptonormativism" — I challenge Habermas's critique of Foucault while analyzing in detail his arguments in the two relevant chapters of *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*. Although I think Habermas misunderstands Foucault on key points related to the interpretation of *Discipline and Punish*, some of the misunderstandings arise from Foucault's own unclarity, especially concerning his notions of "local critique" and "disciplinary power"; so I try to clarify those notions in light of Habermas's critique. Implicitly throughout and explicitly at the end, I argue that the Foucault/Habermas debate needs to be recast in terms of the problem of the self-referentiality of critique in modernity, a problem which Foucault and Habermas share and with which philosophers today are still struggling. Hence the title of my chapter: "Foucault, Habermas, and the Self-Referentiality of Critique."

VII

Each chapter makes it possible, I think, to attain a better understanding of the theoretical and practical issues in the Foucault/Habermas debate, and to recognize their common philosophical concerns as well as their distinct methodological strategies and normative commitments. Together these chapters are substantial evidence of the continued significance of the Foucault/Habermas debate within the contemporary philosophical landscape of ethical, political, and social theory.

Notes

1. "Critical Theory/Intellectual History," in *Michel Foucault: Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977–1984,* ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman, trans. Alan Sheridan et al. (New York: Routledge, 1988), 34–35 [reprinted in this volume]; and "What Is Enlightenment?" in *The Foucault Reader,* ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 39.

2. Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" 42.

3. "Taking Aim at the Heart of the Present," in Habermas's *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historians' Debate,* Shierry Weber Nicholsen, trans. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), 174 [reprinted in this volume].

4. Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures,* trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), 7; cf. 20–21, 41. See also "Philosophy as Stand-In and Interpreter," in *After Philosophy: End or Transformation?* ed. Kenneth Baynes, James Bohman, and Thomas McCarthy (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), 298–299.

5. For example, Foucault's 1961 annotated French translation of Kant's *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View;* the introduction (1966) to Georges Canguilhem's *The Normal and the Pathological,* trans. Carolyn R. Fawcett (with Robert S. Cohen) (New York: Zone Books, 1989), 9–10; "Qu-est-ce que la critique? (Critique et Aufklärung)," *Bulletin de la Société française de philosophie* (May 1978): 35–63; "The Subject and Power," in Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 215–216; and "Critical Theory/Intellectual History," — all of which were published before Habermas wrote *Philosophical Discourse.*

Ian Hacking sums up the issue nicely: "Foucault, let's say, has been completing a dialogue with Kant" ("The Archaeology of Foucault," in *Foucault: A Critical Reader,* ed. David Couzens Hoy [New York: Blackwell, 1986], 39; see also his "Self-improvement" in ibid., 235–240).

6. Foucault writes that genealogy "is a form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of objects, etc. — without having to make reference to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history" (*Power and Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977,* ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, and Kate Soper [New York: Pantheon, 1980], 117).

In McCarthy's words, "The key to Habermas's approach is his rejection of the 'paradigm of consciousness' and its associated 'philosophy of the subject' in favor of the through-and-through intersubjectivist paradigm of 'communicative action'" (his introduction to Habermas, *Philosophical Discourse,* x).

7. For more on these points, see my chapter in this volume.

8. I think a good example of this tendency is the way in which many people, beginning with Habermas, have discussed Foucault's work in connection with the Frankfurt school theorists, especially Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer. An implicit assumption in these discussions is that what Foucault did in the 1960s and 1970s had been done much earlier, for good or for bad, by those theorists.

The relationship between Foucault and the Frankfurt school is a complicated one, however. Habermas first either set up a polarity between the Frankfurt school/modernity and Foucault/postmodernity ("Modernity Versus Postmodernity," *New German Critique* 22 [Winter 1981]: 3–18); or else dismissed as superficial any comparison between them ("The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment," *New German Critique* 26 [Spring–Summer 1982]: 13–30); more recently, in *Philosophical Discourse,* he argued that both positions need to be overcome because neither escapes the philosophy of consciousness (of the subject).

Cf. Axel Honneth's and Thomas McCarthy's chapters in this volume; plus David Ingram, "Foucault and the Frankfurt School: A Discourse on Nietzsche, Power and Knowledge," *Praxis International* 6 (October 1986): 311–327; David Couzens Hoy, "Power, Repression, Progress: Foucault, Lukes, and the Frankfurt School," in *Foucault: A Critical Reader,* 123–47; and Thomas Schäfer, "Aufklärung und Kritik: Foucaults Geschichte des Denkens als Alternative zur *Dialektik der Aufklärung,*" in *Ethos der Moderne: Foucaults Kritik der Aufklärung,* ed. Eva Erdmann, Rainer Forst, and Axel Honneth (Frankfurt: Campus, 1990), 70–86.

9. A good example of a critique of Foucault on normative grounds by a *non*-Habermasian is Charles Taylor's "Foucault on Freedom and Truth," in Hoy, *Foucault: A Critical Reader,* 69–102; cf. William E. Connolly's response, "Taylor, Foucault, and Otherness," in *Political Theory* 13 (August 1985): 365–375, which is followed in turn by Taylor's "Connolly, Foucault, and Truth," 377–385. These essays are discussed below by Richard Bernstein.

10. When Habermas published his most systematic critique of Foucault, in *Philosophical Discourse,* he did not take into consideration what was at the time (1985) Foucault's most recent and, as it turned out, last writings. The reason for this is

that Habermas wrote most of the book before the second two volumes of *The History of Sexuality — The Use of Pleasure,* trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1985) and *The Care of the Self,* trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1986) — were published in June 1984.

11. See, for example, David Couzens Hoy, "Foucault: Modern or Postmodern?" in *After Foucault: Humanistic Knowledge, Postmodern Challenges,* ed. Jonathan Arac (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988), 12–41, where he interprets Foucault as a *post*modernist to defend him against Habermas; cf. also his "Introduction" to *Foucault: A Critical Reader,* 1–25.

A recent collection of essays on Foucault does include several articles on the Foucault/Habermas debate. Since they are not accompanied by a clarification of that debate, I do not think they alone can succeed either in defending Foucault or in explaining the relevance of the debate to ethical, political, and social theory. See *Michel Foucault: Philosopher,* ed. and trans. Timothy J. Armstrong (New York: Routledge, 1992), in particular Rainer Rochlitz, "The Aesthetics of Existence: Post-Conventional Morality and the Theory of Power in Michel Foucault," 248–259; Dominique Janicaud, "Rationality, Force and Power: Foucault and Habermas's Criticisms," 283–302; and Christian Bouchindhomme, "Foucault, Morality and Criticism," 317–327. James Miller's *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993) appeared after this volume first went into production; see my review of it in *Constellations: A Journal of Critical and Democratic Theory,* 1, no. 1 (forthcoming 1994).

12. Cf. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, "What Is Maturity: Habermas and Foucault on 'What Is Enlightenment?'" in Hoy, *Foucault: A Critical Reader;* and their *Michel Foucault*. For a critical discussion of the relationship between Foucault and Heidegger, cf. Jana Sawicki, "Heidegger and Foucault: Escaping Technological Nihilism," *Philosophy and Social Criticism,* 13, no. 2 (1987): 155–173.

13. Cf., for example, Hoy's discussion of "thinking the unthought" in his "Foucault: Modern or Postmodern?" 21ff. James Bernauer, in "Michel Foucault's Ecstatic Thinking," in *The Final Foucault,* ed. James Bernauer and David Rasmussen (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988), 45–82, argues that Foucault is a Heideggerian antimodernist; also his "Beyond Life and Death: On Foucault's Post-Auschwitz Ethic," in Armstrong, *Michel Foucault,* 260–279.

14. Honneth's contribution here is one of two chapters on Foucault in his *The Critique of Power: Reflective Stages in a Critical Social Theory,* Kenneth Baynes, trans. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991). Cf. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison,* Alan Sheridan, trans. (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

15. Cf. Habermas's "Modernity Versus Postmodernity," 13, where he first applies the term "young conservative" to Foucault.

16. Cf. Thomas E. Wartenberg, *The Forms of Power: From Domination to Transformation* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990); and *What Is Enlightenment?:*

Eighteenth Century Answers and Twentieth Century Questions, ed. James Schmidt (Berkeley: University of California Press, forthcoming).

17. On Nietzsche, see Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault,* trans. Paul Bové (Minneapolis: Minnesota, 1988), 70, 88, and the Appendix, which is called "On the Death of Man and Superman"; on Heidegger, see 59, 129, 130.

18. Cf. Janicaud, "Rationality, Force and Power," for an argument that much of Habermas's critique of Foucault stems from his own misunderstanding of Nietzsche.

19. See *Foucault,* pp. 59, 129, 130.

20. Cf. Jana Sawicki, *Disciplining Foucault: Feminism, Power, and the Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991), from which her chapter in this volume is taken.

Part I

2

Two Lectures

Michel Foucault

Lecture One: 7 January 1976

I have wanted to speak to you of my desire to be finished with, and to somehow terminate a series of researches that have been our concern for some four or five years now, in effect, from the date of my arrival here, and which, I am well aware, have met with increasing difficulties, both for you and for myself. Though these researches were very closely related to each other, they have failed to develop into any continuous or coherent whole. They are fragmentary researches, none of which in the last analysis can be said to have proved definitive, nor even to have led anywhere. Diffused and at the same time repetitive, they have continually re-trod the same ground, invoked the same themes, the same concepts, etc.

You will recall my work here, such as it has been: some brief notes on the history of penal procedure, a chapter or so on the evolution and institutionalization of psychiatry in the nineteenth century, some observations on sophistry, on Greek money, on the medieval Inquisition. I have sketched a history of sexuality or at least a history of knowledge of sexuality on the basis of the confessional practice of the seventeenth century or the forms of control of infantile sexuality in the eighteenth to nineteenth century. I have sketched a genealogical history of the origins of a theory and a knowledge of anomaly and of the various techniques that relate to it. None of it does more than mark time. Repetitive and disconnected, it advances nowhere. Since indeed it never ceases to say the same thing, it perhaps says

nothing. It is tangled up into an indecipherable, disorganized muddle. In a nutshell, it is inconclusive.

Still, I could claim that after all these were only trails to be followed, it mattered little where they led; indeed, it was important that they did not have a predetermined starting point and destination. They were merely lines laid down for you to pursue or to divert elsewhere, for me to extend upon or redesign as the case might be. They are, in the final analysis, just fragments, and it is up to you or me to see what we can make of them. For my part, it has struck me that I might have seemed a bit like a whale that leaps to the surface of the water disturbing it momentarily with a tiny jet of spray and lets it be believed, or pretends to believe, or wants to believe, or himself does in fact indeed believe, that down in the depths where no one sees him any more, where he is no longer witnessed nor controlled by anyone, he follows a more profound, coherent and reasoned trajectory. Well, anyway, that was more or less how I at least conceived the situation; it could be that you perceived it differently.

After all, the fact that the character of the work I have presented to you has been at the same time fragmentary, repetitive and discontinuous could well be a reflection of something one might describe as a febrile indolence — a typical affliction of those enamored of libraries, documents, reference works, dusty tomes, texts that are never read, books that are no sooner printed than they are consigned to the shelves of libraries where they thereafter lie dormant to be taken up only some centuries later. It would accord all too well with the busy inertia of those who profess an idle knowledge, a species of luxuriant sagacity, the rich hoard of the *parvenus* whose only outward signs are displayed in footnotes at the bottom of the page. It would accord with all those who feel themselves to be associates of one of the more ancient or more typical secret societies of the West, those oddly indestructible societies unknown it would seem to Antiquity, which came into being with Christianity, most likely at the time of the first monasteries, at the periphery of the invasions, the fires and the forests: I mean to speak of the great warm and tender Freemasonry of useless erudition.

However, it is not simply a taste for such Freemasonry that has inspired my course of action. It seems to me that the work we have done could be justified by the claim that it is adequate to a restricted

period, that of the last ten, fifteen, at most twenty years, a period notable for two events which for all they may not be really important are nonetheless to my mind quite interesting.

On the one hand, it has been a period characterized by what one might term the efficacy of dispersed and discontinuous offensives. There are a number of things I have in mind here. I am thinking, for example, where it was a case of undermining the function of psychiatric institutions, of that curious efficacy of localized antipsychiatric discourses. These are discourses which you are well aware lacked and still lack any systematic principles of coordination of the kind that would have provided or might today provide a system of reference for them. I am thinking of the original reference towards existential analysis or of certain directions inspired in a general way by Marxism, such as Reichian theory. Again, I have in mind that strange efficacy of the attacks that have been directed against traditional morality and hierarchy, attacks which again have no reference except perhaps in a vague and fairly distant way to Reich and Marcuse. On the other hand, there is also the efficacy of the attacks upon the legal and penal system, some of which had a very tenuous connection with the general and in any case pretty dubious notion of class justice, while others had a rather more precisely defined affinity with anarchist themes. Equally, I am thinking of the efficacy of a book such as *L'Anti-Oedipe,* which really has no other source of reference than its own prodigious theoretical inventiveness: a book, or rather a thing, an event, which has managed, even at the most mundane level of psychoanalytic practice, to introduce a note of shrillness into that murmured exchange that has for so long continued uninterrupted between couch and armchair.

I would say, then, that what has emerged in the course of the last ten or fifteen years is a sense of the increasing vulnerability to criticism of things, institutions, practices, discourses. A certain fragility has been discovered in the very bedrock of existence — even, and perhaps above all, in those aspects of it that are most familiar, most solid and most intimately related to our bodies and to our everyday behavior. But together with this sense of instability and this amazing efficacy of discontinuous, particular, and local criticism, one in fact also discovers something that perhaps was not initially foreseen, something one might describe as precisely the inhibiting effect of

global, *totalitarian theories*. It is not that these global theories have not provided nor continue to provide in a fairly consistent fashion useful tools for local research: Marxism and psychoanalysis are proofs of this. But I believe these tools have only been provided on the condition that the theoretical unity of these discourses was in some sense put in abeyance, or at least curtailed, divided, overthrown, caricatured, theatricalized, or what you will. In each case, the attempt to think in terms of a totality has in fact proved a hindrance to research.

So, the main point to be gleaned from these events of the last fifteen years, their predominant feature, is the *local* character of criticism. That should not, I believe, be taken to mean that its qualities are those of an obtuse, naive, or primitive empiricism; nor is it a soggy eclecticism, an opportunism that laps up any and every kind of theoretical approach; nor does it mean a self-imposed ascetism which taken by itself would reduce to the worst kind of theoretical impoverishment. I believe that what this essentially local character of criticism indicates in reality is an autonomous, noncentralized kind of theoretical production, one that is to say whose validity is not dependent on the approval of the established régimes of thought.

It is here that we touch upon another feature of these events that has been manifest for some time now: it seems to me that this local criticism has proceeded by means of what one might term "a return of knowledge." What I mean by that phrase is this: it is a fact that we have repeatedly encountered, at least at a superficial level, in the course of most recent times, an entire thematic to the effect that it is not theory but life that matters, not knowledge but reality, not books but money, etc.; but it also seems to me that over and above, and arising out of this thematic, there is something else to which we are witness, and which we might describe as an *insurrection of subjugated knowledges*.

By subjugated knowledges I mean two things: on the one hand, I am referring to the historical contents that have been buried and disguised in a functionalist coherence or formal systemization. Concretely, it is not a semiology of the life of the asylum, it is not even a sociology of delinquency, that has made it possible to produce an effective criticism of the asylum and likewise of the prison, but rather the immediate emergence of historical contents. And this is simply because only the historical contents allow us to rediscover the rup-

tural effects of conflict and struggle that the order imposed by functionalist or systematizing thought is designed to mask. Subjugated knowledges are thus those blocs of historical knowledge which were present but disguised within the body of functionalist and systematizing theory and which criticism — which obviously draws upon scholarship — has been able to reveal.

On the other hand, I believe that by subjugated knowledges one should understand something else, something which in a sense is altogether different, namely, a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity. I also believe that it is through the reemergence of these low-ranking knowledges, these unqualified, even directly disqualified knowledges (such as that of the psychiatric patient, of the ill person, of the nurse, of the doctor — parallel and marginal as they are to the knowledge of medicine — that of the delinquent, etc.), and which involve what I would call a popular knowledge (*le savoir des gens*) though it is far from being a general commonsense knowledge, but is on the contrary a particular, local, regional knowledge, a differential knowledge incapable of unanimity and which owes its force only to the harshness with which it is opposed by everything surrounding it — that it is through the reappearance of this knowledge, of these local popular knowledges, these disqualified knowledges, that criticism performs its work.

However, there is a strange kind of paradox in the desire to assign to this same category of subjugated knowledges what are on the one hand the products of meticulous, erudite, exact historical knowledge, and on the other hand local and specific knowledges which have no common meaning and which are in some fashion allowed to fall into disuse whenever they are not effectively and explicitly maintained in themselves. Well, it seems to me that our critical discourses of the last fifteen years have in effect discovered their essential force in this association between the buried knowledges of erudition and those disqualified from the hierarchy of knowledges and sciences.

In the two cases — in the case of the erudite as in that of the disqualified knowledges — with what in fact were these buried, subjugated knowledges really concerned? They were concerned with a *historical knowledge of struggles.* In the specialized areas of erudition as

in the disqualified, popular knowledge there lay the memory of hostile encounters which even up to this day have been confined to the margins of knowledge.

What emerges out of this is something one might call a genealogy, or rather a multiplicity of genealogical researches, a painstaking rediscovery of struggles together with the rude memory of their conflicts. And these genealogies, that are the combined product of an erudite knowledge and a popular knowledge, were not possible and could not even have been attempted except on one condition, namely that the tyranny of globalizing discourses with their hierarchy and all their privileges of a theoretical avant-garde was eliminated.

Let us give the term *genealogy* to the union of erudite knowledge and local memories which allows us to establish a historical knowledge of struggles and to make use of this knowledge tactically today. This then will be a provisional definition of the genealogies which I have attempted to compile with you over the last few years.

You are well aware that this research activity, which one can thus call genealogical, has nothing at all to do with an opposition between the abstract unity of theory and the concrete multiplicity of facts. It has nothing at all to do with a disqualification of the speculative dimension which opposes to it, in the name of some kind of scientism, the rigor of well-established knowledges. It is not therefore via an empiricism that the genealogical project unfolds, nor even via a positivism in the ordinary sense of that term. What it really does is to entertain the claims to attention of local, discontinuous, disqualified, illegitimate knowledges against the claims of a unitary body of theory which would filter, hierarchize and order them in the name of some true knowledge and some arbitrary idea of what constitutes a science and its objects. *Genealogies* are therefore not positivistic returns to a more careful or exact form of science. They are precisely antisciences. Not that they vindicate a lyrical right to ignorance or non-knowledge: it is not that they are concerned to deny knowledge or that they esteem the virtues of direct cognition and base their practice upon an immediate experience that escapes encapsulation in knowledge. It is not that with which we are concerned. We are concerned, rather, with the insurrection of knowledges that are opposed primarily not to the contents, methods or concepts of a science, but to the effects of the centralizing powers which are linked to the institution and

functioning of an organized scientific discourse within a society such as ours. Nor does it basically matter all that much that this institutionalization of scientific discourse is embodied in a university, or, more generally, in an educational apparatus, in a theoretical-commercial institution such as psychoanalysis or within the framework of reference that is provided by a political system such as Marxism; for it is really against the effects of the power of a discourse that is considered to be scientific that the genealogy must wage its struggle.

To be more precise, I would remind you how numerous have been those who for many years now, probably for more than half a century, have questioned whether Marxism was, or was not, a science. One might say that the same issue has been posed, and continues to be posed, in the case of psychoanalysis, or even worse, in that of the semiology of literary texts. But to all these demands of: "Is it or is it not a science?," the genealogies or the genealogists would reply: "If you really want to know, the fault lies in your very determination to make a science out of Marxism or psychoanalysis or this or that study." If we have any objection against Marxism, it lies in the fact that it could effectively be a science. In more detailed terms, I would say that even before we can know the extent to which something such as Marxism or psychoanalysis can be compared to a scientific practice in its everyday functioning, its rules of construction, its working concepts, that even before we can pose the question of a formal and structural analogy between Marxist or psychoanalytic discourse, it is surely necessary to question ourselves about our aspirations to the kind of power that is presumed to accompany such a science. It is surely the following kinds of question that would need to be posed: What types of knowledge do you want to disqualify in the very instant of your demand: "Is it a science?" Which speaking, discoursing subjects — which subjects of experience and knowledge — do you then want to "diminish" when you say: "I who conduct this discourse am conducting a scientific discourse, and I am a scientist"? Which theoretical-political *avant garde* do you want to enthrone in order to isolate it from all the discontinuous forms of knowledge that circulate about it? When I see you straining to establish the scientificity of Marxism I do not really think that you are demonstrating once and for all that Marxism has a rational structure and that therefore its propositions are the outcome of verifiable procedures; for me you

are doing something altogether different, you are investing Marxist discourses and those who uphold them with the effects of a power which the West since medieval times has attributed to science and has reserved for those engaged in scientific discourse.

By comparison, then, and in contrast to the various projects which aim to inscribe knowledges in the hierarchical order of power associated with science, a genealogy should be seen as a kind of attempt to emancipate historical knowledges from that subjection, to render them, that is, capable of opposition and of struggle against the coercion of a theoretical, unitary, formal and scientific discourse. It is based on a reactivation of local knowledges — of minor knowledges, as Deleuze might call them — in opposition to the scientific hierarchization of knowledges and the effects intrinsic to their power: this, then, is the project of these disordered and fragmentary genealogies. If we were to characterize it in two terms, then *archaeology* would be the appropriate methodology of this analysis of local discursivities, and *genealogy* would be the tactics whereby, on the basis of the descriptions of these local discursivities, the subjected knowledges which were thus released would be brought into play.

So much can be said by way of establishing the nature of the project as a whole. I would have you consider all these fragments of research, all these discourses, which are simultaneously both superimposed and discontinuous, which I have continued obstinately to pursue for some four or five years now, as elements of these genealogies which have been composed — and by no means by myself alone — in the course of the last fifteen years. At this point, however, a problem arises, and a question: why not continue to pursue a theory which in its discontinuity is so attractive and plausible, albeit so little verifiable? Why not continue to settle upon some aspect of psychiatry or of the theory of sexuality, etc.? It is true, one could continue (and in a certain sense I shall try to do so) if it were not for a certain number of changes in the current situation. By this I mean that it could be that in the course of the last five, ten, or even fifteen years, things have assumed a different complexion — the contest could be said to present a different physiognomy. Is the relation of forces today still such as to allow these disinterred knowledges some kind of autonomous life? Can they be isolated by these means from every subjugating relationship? What force do they have taken in themselves? And,

after all, is it not perhaps the case that these fragments of genealogies are no sooner brought to light, that the particular elements of the knowledge that one seeks to disinter are no sooner accredited and put into circulation, than they run the risk of recodification, recolonization? In fact, those unitary discourses, which first disqualified and then ignored them when they made their appearance, are, it seems, quite ready now to annex them, to take them back within the fold of their own discourse and to invest them with everything this implies in terms of their effects of knowledge and power. And if we want to protect these only lately liberated fragments are we not in danger of ourselves constructing, with our own hands, that unitary discourse to which we are invited, perhaps to lure us into a trap, by those who say to us: "All this is fine, but where are you heading? What kind of unity are you after?" The temptation, up to a certain point, is to reply: "Well, we just go on, in a cumulative fashion; after all, the moment at which we risk colonization has not yet arrived." One could even attempt to throw out a challenge: "Just try to colonize us then!" Or one might say, for example, "Has there been, from the time when antipsychiatry or the genealogy of psychiatric institutions were launched — and it is now a good fifteen years ago — a single Marxist, or a single psychiatrist, who has gone over the same ground in his own terms and shown that these genealogies that we produced were false, inadequately elaborated, poorly articulated and ill-founded?" In fact, as things stand in reality, these collected fragments of a genealogy remain as they have always been, surrounded by a prudent silence. At most, the only arguments that we have heard against them have been of the kind I believe were voiced by Monsieur Juquin:[1] "All this is all very well, but Soviet psychiatry nonetheless remains the foremost in the world." To which I would reply: "How right you are; Soviet psychiatry is indeed the foremost in the world and it is precisely that which one would hold against it."

The silence, or rather the prudence, with which the unitary theories avoid the genealogy of knowledges might therefore be a good reason to continue to pursue it. Then at least one could proceed to multiply the genealogical fragments in the form of so many traps, demands, challenges, what you will. But in the long run, it is probably overoptimistic, if we are thinking in terms of a contest — that of knowledge against the effects of the power of scientific discourse —

to regard the silence of one's adversaries as indicative of a fear we have inspired in them. For perhaps the silence of the enemy — and here at the very least we have a methodological or tactical principle that it is always useful to bear in mind — can also be the index of our failure to produce any such fear at all. At all events, we must proceed just as if we had not alarmed them at all, in which case it will be no part of our concern to provide a solid and homogeneous theoretical terrain for all these dispersed genealogies, nor to descend upon them from on high with some kind of halo of theory that would unite them. Our task, on the contrary, will be to expose and specify the issue at stake in this opposition, this struggle, this insurrection of knowledges against the institutions and against effects of the knowledge and power that invests scientific discourse.

What is at stake in all these genealogies is the nature of this power which has surged into view in all its violence, aggression and absurdity in the course of the last forty years, contemporaneously, that is, with the collapse of Fascism and the decline of Stalinism. What, we must ask, is this power — or rather, since that is to give a formulation to the question that invites the kind of theoretical coronation of the whole which I am so keen to avoid — what are these various contrivances of power, whose operations extend to such differing levels and sectors of society and are possessed of such manifold ramifications? What are their mechanisms, their effects and their relations? The issue here can, I believe, be crystallized essentially in the following question: is the analysis of power or of powers to be deduced in one way or another from the economy? Let me make this question and my reasons for posing it somewhat clearer. It is not at all my intention to abstract from what are innumerable and enormous differences; yet despite, and even because of these differences, I consider there to be a certain point in common between the juridical, and let us call it, liberal, conception of political power (found in the *philosophes* of the eighteenth century) and the Marxist conception, or at any rate a certain conception currently held to be Marxist. I would call this common point an economism in the theory of power. By that I mean that in the case of the classic, juridical theory, power is taken to be a right, which one is able to possess like a commodity, and which one can in consequence transfer or alienate, either wholly or partially, through a legal act or through some act that establishes a

right, such as takes place through cession or contract. Power is that concrete power which every individual holds, and whose partial or total cession enables political power or sovereignty to be established. This theoretical construction is essentially based on the idea that the constitution of political power obeys the model of a legal transaction involving a contractual type of exchange (hence the clear analogy that runs through all these theories between power and commodities, power and wealth). In the other case — I am thinking here of the general Marxist conception of power — one finds none of all that. Nonetheless, there is something else inherent in this latter conception, something which one might term an economic functionality of power. This economic functionality is present to the extent that power is conceived primarily in terms of the role it plays in the maintenance simultaneously of the relations of production and of a class domination which the development and specific forms of the forces of production have rendered possible. On this view, then, the historical raison d'être of political power is to be found in the economy. Broadly speaking, in the first case we have a political power whose formal model is discoverable in the process of exchange, the economic circulation of commodities; in the second case, the historical raison d'être of political power and the principle of its concrete forms and actual functioning, is located in the economy. Well then, the problem involved in the researches to which I refer can, I believe, be broken down in the following manner: in the first place, is power always in a subordinate position relative to the economy? Is it always in the service of, and ultimately answerable to, the economy? Is its essential end and purpose to serve the economy? Is it destined to realize, consolidate, maintain and reproduce the relations appropriate to the economy and essential to its functioning? In the second place, is power modeled upon the commodity? Is it something that one possesses, acquires, cedes through force or contract, that one alienates or recovers, that circulates, that voids this or that region? Or, on the contrary, do we need to employ varying tools in its analysis — even, that is, when we allow that it effectively remains the case that the relations of power do indeed remain profoundly enmeshed in and with economic relations and participate with them in a common circuit? If that is the case, it is not the models of functional subordination or formal isomorphism that will characterize the in-

terconnection between politics and the economy. Their indissolubility will be of a different order, one that it will be our task to determine.

What means are available to us today if we seek to conduct a noneconomic analysis of power? Very few, I believe. We have in the first place the assertion that power is neither given, nor exchanged, nor recovered, but rather exercised, and that it only exists in action. Again, we have at our disposal another assertion to the effect that power is not primarily the maintenance and reproduction of economic relations, but is above all a relation of force. The questions to be posed would then be these: if power is exercised, what sort of exercise does it involve? In what does it consist? What is its mechanism? There is an immediate answer that many contemporary analyses would appear to offer: power is essentially that which represses. Power represses nature, the instincts, a class, individuals. Though one finds this definition of power as repression endlessly repeated in present day discourse, it is not that discourse which invented it — Hegel first spoke of it, then Freud and later Reich. In any case, it has become almost automatic in the parlance of the times to define power as an organ of repression. So should not the analysis of power be first and foremost an analysis of the mechanisms of repression?

Then again, there is a second reply we might make: if power is properly speaking the way in which relations of forces are deployed and given concrete expression, rather than analyzing it in terms of cession, contract, or alienation, or functionally in terms of its maintenance of the relations of production, should we not analyse it primarily in terms of *struggle, conflict,* and *war*? One would then confront the original hypothesis, according to which power is essentially repression, with a second hypothesis to the effect that power is war, a war continued by other means. This reversal of Clausewitz's assertion that war is politics continued by other means has a triple significance: in the first place, it implies that the relations of power that function in a society such as ours essentially rest upon a definite relation of forces that is established at a determinate, historically specifiable moment, in war and by war. Furthermore, if it is true that political power puts an end to war, that it installs, or tries to install, the reign of peace in civil society, this by no means implies that it suspends the effects of war or neutralizes the disequilibrium revealed

in the final battle. The role of political power, on this hypothesis, is perpetually to reinscribe this relation through a form of unspoken warfare; to reinscribe it in social institutions, in economic inequalities, in language, in the bodies themselves of each and every one of us.

So this would be the first meaning to assign to the inversion of Clausewitz's aphorism that war is politics continued by other means. It consists in seeing politics as sanctioning and upholding the disequilibrium of forces that was displayed in war. But there is also something else that the inversion signifies, namely, that none of the political struggles, the conflicts waged over power, with power, for power, the alterations in the relations of forces, the favoring of certain tendencies, the reinforcements, etc., etc., that come about within this "civil peace" — that none of these phenomena in a political system should be interpreted except as the continuation of war. They should, that is to say, be understood as episodes, factions, and displacements in that same war. Even when one writes the history of peace and its institutions, it is always the history of this war that one is writing. The third, and final, meaning to be assigned to the inversion of Clausewitz's aphorism, is that the end result can only be the outcome of war, that is, of a contest of strength, to be decided in the last analyses by recourse to arms. The political battle would cease with this final battle. Only a final battle of that kind would put an end, once and for all, to the exercise of power as continual war.

So, no sooner do we attempt to liberate ourselves from economistic analyses of power, than two solid hypotheses offer themselves: the one argues that the mechanisms of power are those of repression. For convenience's sake, I shall term this Reich's hypothesis. The other argues that the basis of the relationship of power lies in the hostile engagement of forces. Again for convenience, I shall call this Nietzsche's hypothesis.

These two hypotheses are not irreconcilable; they even seem to be linked in a fairly convincing manner. After all, repression could be seen as the political consequence of war, somewhat as oppression, in the classic theory of political right, was seen as the abuse of sovereignty in the juridical order.

One might thus contrast two major systems of approach to the analysis of power: in the first place, there is the old system as found

in the *philosophes* of the eighteenth century. The conception of power as an original right that is given up in the establishment of sovereignty, and the contract, as matrix of political power, provide its points of articulation. A power so constituted risks becoming oppression whenever it overextends itself, whenever — that is — it goes beyond the terms of the contract. Thus we have contract-power, with oppression as its limit, or rather as the transgression of this limit. In contrast, the other system of approach no longer tries to analyze political power according to the schema of contract–oppression, but in accordance with that of war–repression, and, at this point, repression no longer occupies the place that oppression occupies in relation to the contract, that is, it is not abuse, but is, on the contrary, the mere effect and continuation of a relation of domination. On this view, repression is none other than the realization, within the continual warfare of this pseudo-peace, of a perpetual relationship of force.

Thus we have two schemes for the analysis of power. The contract–oppression schema, which is the juridical one, and the domination–repression or war–repression schema for which the pertinent opposition is not between the legitimate and illegitimate, as in the first schema, but between struggle and submission.

It is obvious that all my work in recent years has been couched in the schema of struggle–repression, and it is this — which I have hitherto been attempting to apply — which I have not been forced to reconsider, both because it is still insufficiently elaborated at a whole number of points, and because I believe that these two notions of repression and war must themselves be considerably modified if not ultimately abandoned. In any case, I believe that they must be submitted to closer scrutiny.

I have always been especially diffident of this notion of repression: it is precisely with reference to those genealogies of which I was speaking just now — of the history of penal right, of psychiatric power, of the control of infantile sexuality, etc. — that I have tried to demonstrate to you the extent to which the mechanisms that were brought into operation in these power formations were something quite other, or in any case something much more, than repression. The need to investigate this notion of repression more thoroughly springs therefore from the impression I have that it is wholly inade-

quate to the analysis of the mechanisms and effects of power that it is so pervasively used to characterize today.

Lecture Two: 14 January 1976

The course of study that I have been following until now — roughly since 1970/71 — has been concerned with the *how* of power. I have tried, that is, to relate its mechanisms to two points of reference, two limits: on the one hand, to the rules of right that provide a formal delimitation of power; on the other, to the effects of truth that this power produces and transmits, and which in their turn reproduce this power. Hence we have a triangle: power, right, truth.

Schematically, we can formulate the traditional question of political philosophy in the following terms: how is the discourse of truth, or quite simply, philosophy as that discourse which par excellence is concerned with truth, able to fix limits to the rights of power? That is the traditional question. The one I would prefer to pose is rather different. Compared to the traditional, noble, and philosophic question it is much more down-to-earth and concrete. My problem is rather this: what rules of right are implemented by the relations of power in the production of discourses of truth? Or alternatively, what type of power is susceptible of producing discourses of truth that in a society such as ours are endowed with such potent effects? What I mean is this: in a society such as ours, but basically in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterize, and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated, nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation, and functioning of a discourse. There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association. We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth. This is the case for every society, but I believe that in ours the relationship between power, right, and truth is organized in a highly specific fashion. If I were to characterize, not its mechanism itself, but its intensity and constancy, I would say that we are forced to produce the truth of power that our society demands, of which it has need, in order to function: we *must* speak the truth;

we are constrained or condemned to confess or to discover the truth. Power never ceases its interrogation, its inquisition, its registration of truth: it institutionalizes, professionalizes, and rewards its pursuit. In the last analysis, we must produce truth as we must produce wealth, indeed we must produce truth in order to produce wealth in the first place. In another way, we are also subjected to truth in the sense in which it is truth that makes the laws, that produces the true discourse which, at least partially, decides, transmits, and itself extends upon the effects of power. In the end, we are judged, condemned, classified, determined in our undertakings, destined to a certain mode of living or dying, as a function of the true discourses which are the bearers of the specific effects of power.

So, it is the rules of right, the mechanisms of power, the effects of truth or if you like, the rules of power and the powers of true discourses, that can be said more or less to have formed the general terrain of my concern, even if, as I know full well, I have traversed it only partially and in a very zig-zag fashion. I should like to speak briefly about this course of research, about what I have considered as being its guiding principle and about the methodological imperatives and precautions which I have sought to adopt. As regards the general principle involved in a study of the relations between right and power, it seems to me that in Western societies since medieval times it has been royal power that has provided the essential focus around which legal thought has been elaborated. It is in response to the demands of royal power, for its profit and to serve as its instrument or justification, that the juridical edifice of our own society has been developed. Right in the West is the King's right. Naturally everyone is familiar with the famous, celebrated, repeatedly emphasized role of the jurists in the organization of royal power. We must not forget that the revitalization of Roman law in the twelfth century was the major event around which, and on whose basis, the juridical edifice which had collapsed after the fall of the Roman Empire was reconstructed. This resurrection of Roman law had in effect a technical and constitutive role to play in the establishment of the authoritarian, administrative, and, in the final analysis, absolute power of the monarchy. And when this legal edifice escapes in later centuries from the control of the monarch, when, more accurately, it is turned against that control, it is always the limits of this sovereign

power that are put in question, its prerogatives that are challenged. In other words, I believe that the King remains the central personage in the whole legal edifice of the West. When it comes to the general organization of the legal system in the West, it is essentially with the King, his rights, his power and its eventual limitations, that one is dealing. Whether the jurists were the King's henchmen or his adversaries, it is of royal power that we are speaking in every case when we speak of these grandiose edifices of legal thought and knowledge.

There are two ways in which we do so speak. Either we do so in order to show the nature of the juridical armory that invested royal power, to reveal the monarch as the effective embodiment of sovereignty, to demonstrate that his power, for all that it was absolute, was exactly that which befitted his fundamental right. Or, by contrast, we do so in order to show the necessity of imposing limits upon this sovereign power, of submitting it to certain rules of right, within whose confines it had to be exercised in order for it to remain legitimate. The essential role of the theory of right, from medieval times onwards, was to fix the legitimacy of power; that is the major problem around which the whole theory of right and sovereignty is organized.

When we say that sovereignty is the central problem of right in Western societies, what we mean basically is that the essential function of the discourse and techniques of right has been to efface the domination intrinsic to power in order to present the latter at the level of appearance under two different aspects: on the one hand, as the legitimate rights of sovereignty, and on the other, as the legal obligation to obey it. The system of right is centered entirely upon the King, and it is therefore designed to eliminate the fact of domination and its consequences.

My general project over the past few years has been, in essence, to reverse the mode of analysis followed by the entire discourse of right from the time of the Middle Ages. My aim, therefore, was to invert it, to give due weight, that is, to the fact of domination, to expose both its latent nature and its brutality. I then wanted to show now only how right is, in a general way, the instrument of this domination — which scarcely needs saying — but also to show the extent to which, and the forms in which, right (not simply the laws but the whole complex of apparatuses, institutions, and regulations respon-

sible for their application) transmits and puts in motion relations that are not relations of sovereignty, but of domination. Moreover, in speaking of domination I do not have in mind that solid and global kind of domination that one person exercises over others, or one group over another, but the manifold forms of domination that can be exercised within society. Not the domination of the King in his central position, therefore, but that of his subjects in their mutual relations: not the uniform edifice of sovereignty, but the multiple forms of subjugation that have a place and function within the social organism.

The system of right, the domain of the law, are permanent agents of these relations of domination, these polymorphous techniques of subjugation. Right should be viewed, I believe, not in terms of a legitimacy to be established, but in terms of the methods of subjugation that it instigates.

The problem for me is how to avoid this question, central to the theme of right, regarding sovereignty and the obedience of individual subjects in order that I may substitute the problem of domination and subjugation for that of sovereignty and obedience. Given that this was to be the general line of my analysis, there were a certain number of methodological precautions that seemed requisite to its pursuit. In the very first place, it seemed important to accept that the analysis in question should not concern itself with the regulated and legitimate forms of power in their central locations, with the general mechanisms through which they operate, and the continual effects of these. On the contrary, it should be concerned with power at its extremities, in its ultimate destinations, with those points where it becomes capillary, that is, in its more regional and local forms and institutions. Its paramount concern, in fact, should be with the point where power surmounts the rules of right which organize and delimit it and extends itself beyond them, invests itself in institutions, becomes embodied in techniques, and equips itself with instruments and eventually even violent means of material intervention. To give an example: rather than try to discover where and how the right of punishment is founded on sovereignty, how it is presented in the theory of monarchical right or in that of democratic right, I have tried to see in what ways punishment and the power of punishment are effectively embodied in a certain number of local, regional, ma-

terial institutions, which are concerned with torture or imprisonment, and to place these in the climate — at once institutional and physical, regulated and violent — of the effective apparatuses of punishment. In other words, one should try to locate power at the extreme points of its exercise, where it is always less legal in character.

A second methodological precaution urged that the analysis should not concern itself with power at the level of conscious intention or decision; that it should not attempt to consider power from its internal point of view and that it should refrain from posing the labyrinthine and unanswerable question: "Who then has power and what has he in mind? What is the aim of someone who possesses power?" Instead, it is a case of studying power at the point where its intention, if it has one, is completely invested in its real and effective practices. What is needed is a study of power in its external visage, at the point where it is in direct and immediate relationship with that which we can provisionally call its object, its target, its field of application, there — that is to say — where it installs itself and produces its real effects.

Let us not, therefore, ask why certain people want to dominate, what they seek, what is their overall strategy. Let us ask, instead, how things work at the level of ongoing subjugation, at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviors, etc. In other words, rather than ask ourselves how the sovereign appears to us in his lofty isolation, we should try to discover how it is that subjects are gradually, progressively, really and materially constituted through a multiplicity of organisms, forces, energies, materials, desires, thoughts, etc. We should try to grasp subjection in its material instance as a constitution of subjects. This would be the exact opposite of Hobbes's project in *Leviathan,* and of that, I believe, of all jurists for whom the problem is the distillation of a single will — or rather, the constitution of a unitary, singular body animated by the spirit of sovereignty — from the particular wills of a multiplicity of individuals. Think of the scheme of Leviathan: insofar as he is a fabricated man, Leviathan is no other than the amalgamation of a certain number of separate individualities, who find themselves reunited by the complex of elements that go to compose the State; but at the heart of the State, or rather, at its head, there exists something which constitutes it as such,

and this is sovereignty, which Hobbes says is precisely the spirit of Leviathan. Well, rather than worry about the problem of the central spirit, I believe that we must attempt to study the myriad of bodies which are constituted as peripheral *subjects* as a result of the effects of power.

A third methodological precaution relates to the fact that power is not to be taken to be a phenomenon of one individual's consolidated and homogeneous domination over others, or that of one group or class over others. What, by contrast, should always be kept in mind is that power, if we do not take too distant a view of it, is not that which makes the difference between those who exclusively possess and retain it, and those who do not have it and submit to it. Power must by analyzed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localized here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a netlike organization. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application.

The individual is not to be conceived as a sort of elementary nucleus, a primitive atom, a multiple and inert material on which power comes to fasten or against which it happens to strike, and in so doing subdues or crushes individuals. In fact, it is already one of the prime effects of power that certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, certain desires, comes to be identified and constituted as individuals. The individual, that is, is not the vis-à-vis of power; it is, I believe, one of its prime effects. The individual is an effect of power, and at the same time, or precisely to the extent to which it is that effect, it is the element of its articulation. The individual which power has constituted is at the same time its vehicle.

There is a fourth methodological precaution that follows from this: when I say that power establishes a network through which it freely circulates, this is true only up to a certain point. In much the same fashion we could say that therefore we all have a fascism in our heads, or, more profoundly, that we all have a power in our bodies. But I

do not believe that one should conclude from that that power is the best distributed thing in the world, although in some sense that is indeed so. We are not dealing with a sort of democratic or anarchic distribution of power through bodies. That is to say, it seems to me — and this then would be the fourth methodological precaution — that the important thing is not to attempt some kind of deduction of power starting from its center and aimed at the discovery of the extent to which it permeates into the base, of the degree to which it reproduces itself down to and including the most molecular elements of society. One must rather conduct an *ascending* analysis of power, starting, that is, from its infinitesimal mechanisms, which each have their own history, their own trajectory, their own techniques and tactics, and then see how these mechanisms of power have been — and continue to be — invested, colonized, utilized, involuted, transformed, displaced, extended, etc., by ever more general mechanisms and by forms of global domination. It is not that this global domination extends itself right to the base in a plurality of repercussions: I believe that the manner in which the phenomena, the techniques, and the procedures of power enter into play at the most basic levels must be analyzed, that the way in which these procedures are displaced, extended, and altered must certainly be demonstrated; but above all what must be shown is the manner in which they are invested and annexed by more global phenomena and the subtle fashion in which more general powers or economic interests are able to engage with these technologies that are at once both relatively autonomous of power and act as its infinitesimal elements. In order to make this clearer, one might cite the example of madness. The descending type of analysis, the one of which I believe one ought to be wary, will say that the bourgeoisie has, since the sixteenth or seventeenth century, been the dominant class; from this premise, it will then set out to deduce the internment of the insane. One can always make this deduction, it is always easily done and that is precisely what I would hold against it. It is in fact a simple matter to show that since lunatics are precisely those persons who are useless to industrial production, one is obliged to dispense with them. One could argue similarly in regard to infantile sexuality — and several thinkers, including Wilhelm Reich, have indeed sought to do so up to a certain point. Given the domination of the bourgeois class, how can one

understand the repression of infantile sexuality? Well, very simply — given that the human body had become essentially a force of production from the time of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, all the forms of its expenditure which did not lend themselves to the constitution of the productive forces — and were therefore exposed as redundant — were banned, excluded, and repressed. These kinds of deduction are always possible. They are simultaneously correct and false. Above all they are too glib, because one can always do exactly the opposite and show, precisely by appeal to the principle of the dominance of the bourgeois class, that the forms of control of infantile sexuality could in no way have been predicted. On the contrary, it is equally plausible to suggest that what was needed was sexual training, the encouragement of a sexual precociousness, given that what was fundamentally at stake was the constitution of a labor force whose optimal state, as we well know, at least at the beginning of the nineteenth century, was to be infinite: the greater the labor force, the better able would the system of capitalist production have been to fulfill and improve its functions.

I believe that anything can be deduced from the general phenomenon of the domination of the bourgeois class. What needs to be done is something quite different. One needs to investigate historically, and beginning from the lowest level, how mechanisms of power have been able to function. In regard to the confinement of the insane, for example, or the repression and interdiction of sexuality, we need to see the manner in which, at the effective level of the family, of the immediate environment, of the cells and most basic units of society, these phenomena of repression or exclusion possessed their instruments and their logic, in response to a certain number of needs. We need to identify the agents responsible for them, their real agents (those which constituted the immediate social entourage, the family, parents, doctors, etc.), and not be content to lump them under the formula of a generalized bourgeoisie. We need to see how these mechanisms of power, at a given moment, in a precise conjuncture and by means of a certain number of transformations, have begun to become economically advantageous and politically useful. I think that in this way one could easily manage to demonstrate that what the bourgeoisie needed, or that in which its system discovered its real interests, was not the exclusion of the mad

or the surveillance and prohibition of infantile masturbation (for, to repeat, such a system can perfectly well tolerate quite opposite practices), but rather, the techniques and procedures themselves of such an exclusion. It is the mechanisms of that exclusion that are necessary, the apparatuses of surveillance, the medicalization of sexuality, of madness, of delinquency, all the micromechanisms of power, that came, from a certain moment in time, to represent the interests of the bourgeoisie. Or even better, we could say that to the extent to which this view of the bourgeoisie and of its interests appears to lack content, at least in regard to the problems with which we are here concerned, it reflects the fact that it was not the bourgeoisie itself which thought that madness had to be excluded or infantile sexuality repressed. What in fact happened instead was that the mechanisms of the exclusion of madness, and of the surveillance of infantile sexuality, began from a particular point in time, and for reasons which need to be studied, to reveal their political usefulness and to lend themselves to economic profit, and that as a natural consequence, all of a sudden, they came to be colonized and maintained by global mechanisms and the entire State system. It is only if we grasp these techniques of power and demonstrate the economic advantages or political utility that derives from them in a given context for specific reasons, that we can understand how these mechanisms come to be effectively incorporated into the social whole.

To put this somewhat differently: the bourgeoisie has never had any use for the insane; but the procedures it has employed to exclude them have revealed and realized — from the nineteenth century onwards, and again on the basis of certain transformations — a political advantage, on occasion even a certain economic utility, which have consolidated the system and contributed to its overall functioning. The bourgeoisie is interested in power, not in madness, in the system of control of infantile sexuality, not in that phenomenon itself. The bourgeoisie could not care less about delinquents, about their punishment and rehabilitation, which economically have little importance, but it is concerned about the complex of mechanisms with which delinquency is controlled, pursued, punished, and reformed, etc.

As for our fifth methodological precaution: it is quite possible that the major mechanisms of power have been accompanied by ideolog-

ical productions. There has, for example, probably been an ideology of education, an ideology of the monarchy, an ideology of parliamentary democracy, etc.; but basically I do not believe that what has taken place can be said to be ideological. It is both much more and much less than ideology. It is the production of effective instruments for the formation and accumulation of knowledge — methods of observation, techniques of registration, procedures for investigation and research, apparatuses of control. All this means that power, when it is exercised through these subtle mechanisms, cannot but evolve, organize, and put into circulation a knowledge, or rather apparatuses of knowledge, which are not ideological constructs.

By way of summarizing these five methodological precautions, I would say that we should direct our researches on the nature of power not towards the juridical edifice of sovereignty, the State apparatuses and the ideologies which accompany them, but towards domination and the material operators of power, towards forms of subjection and the inflections and utilizations of their localized systems, and towards strategic apparatuses. We must eschew the model of Leviathan in the study of power. We must escape from the limited field of juridical sovereignty and State institutions, and instead base our analysis of power on the study of the techniques and tactics of domination.

This, in its general outline, is the methodological course that I believe must be followed, and which I have tried to pursue in the various researches that we have conducted over recent years on psychiatric power, on infantile sexuality, on political systems, etc. Now as one explores these fields of investigation, observing the methodological precautions I have mentioned, I believe that what then comes into view is a solid body of historical fact, which will ultimately bring us into confrontation with the problems of which I want to speak this year.

This solid, historical body of fact is the juridical-political theory of sovereignty of which I spoke a moment ago, a theory which has had four roles to play. In the first place, it has been used to refer to a mechanism of power that was effective under the feudal monarchy. In the second place, it has served as instrument and even as justification for the construction of the large-scale administrative monarchies. Again, from the time of the sixteenth century and more than ever from the seventeenth century onwards, but already at the time

of the wars of religion, the theory of sovereignty has been a weapon which has circulated from one camp to another, which has been utilized in one sense or another, either to limit or else to reinforce royal power: we find it among Catholic monarchists and Protestant antimonarchists, among Protestant and more-or-less liberal monarchists, but also among Catholic partisans of regicide or dynastic transformation. It functions both in the hands of aristocrats and in the hands of parliamentarians. It is found among the representatives of royal power and among the last feudatories. In short, it was the major instrument of political and theoretical struggle around systems of power of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Finally, in the eighteenth century, it is again this same theory of sovereignty, reactivated through the doctrine of Roman law, that we find in its essentials in Rousseau and his contemporaries, but now with a fourth role to play: now it is concerned with the construction, in opposition to the administrative, authoritarian, and absolutist monarchies, of an alternative model, that of parliamentary democracy. And it is still this role that it plays at the moment of the Revolution.

Well, it seems to me that if we investigate these four roles there is a definite conclusion to be drawn: as long as a feudal type of society survived, the problems to which the theory of sovereignty was addressed were in effect confined to the general mechanisms of power, to the way in which its forms of existence at the higher level of society influenced its exercise at the lowest levels. In other words, the relationship of sovereignty, whether interpreted in a wider or a narrower sense, encompasses the totality of the social body. In effect, the mode in which power was exercised could be defined in its essentials in terms of the relationship sovereign–subject. But in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, we have the production of an important phenomenon, the emergence, or rather the invention, of a new mechanism of power possessed of highly specific procedural techniques, completely novel instruments, quite different apparatuses, and which is also, I believe, absolutely incompatible with the relations of sovereignty.

This new mechanism of power is more dependent upon bodies and what they do than upon the Earth and its products. It is a mechanism of power which permits time and labor, rather than wealth and commodities, to be extracted from bodies. It is a type of

power which is constantly exercised by means of surveillance rather than in a discontinuous manner by means of a system of levies or obligations distributed over time. It presupposes a tightly knit grid of material coercions rather than the physical existence of a sovereign. It is ultimately dependent upon the principle, which introduces a genuinely new economy of power, that one must be able simultaneously both to increase the subjected forces and to improve the force and efficacy of that which subjects them.

This type of power is in every aspect the antithesis of that mechanism of power which the theory of sovereignty described or sought to transcribe. The latter is linked to a form of power that is exercised over the Earth and its products, much more than over human bodies and their operations. The theory of sovereignty is something which refers to the displacement and appropriation on the part of power, not of time and labor, but of goods and wealth. It allows discontinuous obligations distributed over time to be given legal expression but it does not allow for the codification of a continuous surveillance. It enables power to be founded in the physical existence of the sovereign, but not in continuous and permanent systems of surveillance. The theory of sovereignty permits the foundation of an absolute power in the absolute expenditure of power. It does not allow for a calculation of power in terms of the minimum expenditure for the maximum return.

This new type of power, which can no longer be formulated in terms of sovereignty, is, I believe, one of the great inventions of bourgeois society. It has been a fundamental instrument in the constitution of industrial capitalism and of the type of society that is its accompaniment. This nonsovereign power, which lies outside the form of sovereignty, is disciplinary power. Impossible to describe in the terminology of the theory of sovereignty from which it differs so radically, this disciplinary power ought by rights to have led to the disappearance of the grand juridical edifice created by that theory. But in reality, the theory of sovereignty has continued not only to exist as an ideology of right, but also to provide the organizing principle of the legal codes which Europe acquired in the nineteenth century, beginning with the Napoleonic Code.

Why has the theory of sovereignty persisted in this fashion as an ideology and an organizing principle of these major legal codes? For

two reasons, I believe. On the one hand, it has been, in the eighteenth and again in the nineteenth century, a permanent instrument of criticism of the monarchy and of all the obstacles that can thwart the development of disciplinary society. But at the same time, the theory of sovereignty, and the organization of a legal code centered upon it, have allowed a system of right to be superimposed upon the mechanisms of discipline in such a way as to conceal its actual procedures, the element of domination inherent in its techniques, and to guarantee to everyone, by virtue of the sovereignty of the State, the exercise of his proper sovereign rights. The juridical systems — and this applies both to their codification and to their theorization — have enabled sovereignty to be democratized through the constitution of a public right articulated upon collective sovereignty, while at the same time this democratization of sovereignty was fundamentally determined by and grounded in mechanisms of disciplinary coercion.

To put this in more rigorous terms, one might say that once it became necessary for disciplinary constraints to be exercised through mechanisms of domination and yet at the same time for their effective exercise of power to be disguised, a theory of sovereignty was required to make an appearance at the level of the legal apparatus, and to reemerge in its codes. Modern society, then, from the nineteenth century up to our own day, has been characterized on the one hand, by a legislation, a discourse, an organization based on public right, whose principle of articulation is the social body and the delegative status of each citizen; and, on the other hand, by a closely linked grid of disciplinary coercions whose purpose is in fact to assure the cohesion of this same social body. Though a theory of right is a necessary companion to this grid, it cannot in any event provide the terms of its endorsement. Hence these two limits, a right of sovereignty and a mechanism of discipline, which define, I believe, the arena in which power is exercised. But these two limits are so heterogeneous that they cannot possibly be reduced to each other. The powers of modern society are exercised through, on the basis of, and by virtue of, this very heterogeneity between a public right of sovereignty and a polymorphous disciplinary mechanism. This is not to suggest that there is on the one hand an explicit and scholarly system of right which is that of sovereignty, and, on the other hand,

obscure and unspoken disciplines which carry out their shadowy operations in the depths, and thus constitute the bedrock of the great mechanism of power. In reality, the disciplines have their own discourse. They engender, for the reasons of which we spoke earlier, apparatuses of knowledge (*savoir*) and a multiplicity of new domains of understanding. They are extraordinarily inventive participants in the order of these knowledge-producing apparatuses. Disciplines are the bearers of a discourse, but this cannot be the discourse of right. The discourse of discipline has nothing in common with that of law, rule, or sovereign will. The disciplines may well be the carriers of a discourse that speaks of a rule, but this is not the juridical rule deriving from sovereignty, but a natural rule, a norm. The code they come to define is not that of law but that of normalization. Their reference is to a theoretical horizon which of necessity has nothing in common with the edifice of right. It is human science which constitutes their domain, and clinical knowledge their jurisprudence.

In short, what I have wanted to demonstrate in the course of the last few years is not the manner in which at the advance front of the exact sciences the uncertain, recalcitrant, confused dominion of human behavior has little by little been annexed to science: it is not through some advancement in the rationality of the exact sciences that the human sciences were gradually constituted. I believe that the process which has really rendered the discourse of the human sciences possible is the juxtaposition, the encounter between two lines of approach, two mechanisms, two absolutely heterogeneous types of discourse: on the one hand there is the reorganization of right that invests sovereignty, and on the other, the mechanics of the coercive forces whose exercise takes a disciplinary form. And I believe that in our own times power is exercised simultaneously through this right and these techniques and that these techniques and these discourses, to which the disciplines give rise, invade the area of right so that the procedures of normalization come to be ever more constantly engaged in the colonization of those of law. I believe that all this can explain the global functioning of what I would call a *society of normalization*. I mean, more precisely, that disciplinary normalizations come into ever greater conflict with the juridical systems of sovereignty: their incompatibility with each other is ever more acutely felt and apparent; some kind of arbitrating discourse is made ever

more necessary, a type of power and of knowledge that the sanctity of science would render neutral. It is precisely in the extension of medicine that we see, in some sense, not so much the linking as the perpetual exchange or encounter of mechanisms of discipline with the principle of right. The developments of medicine, the general medicalization of behaviors, conducts, discourses, desires, etc., take place at the point of intersection between the two heterogeneous levels of discipline and sovereignty. For this reason, against these usurpations by the disciplinary mechanisms, against this ascent of a power that is tied to scientific knowledge, we find that there is no solid recourse available to us today, such being our situation, except that which lies precisely in the return to a theory of right organized around sovereignty and articulated upon its ancient principle. When today one wants to object in some way to the disciplines and all the effects of power and knowledge that are linked to them, what is it that one does, concretely, in real life, what do the Magistrates Union[2] or other similar institutions do, if not precisely appeal to this canon of right, this famous, formal right, that is said to be bourgeois, and which in reality is the right of sovereignty? But I believe that we find ourselves here in a kind of blind alley: it is not through recourse to sovereignty against discipline that the effects of disciplinary power can be limited, because sovereignty and disciplinary mechanisms are two absolutely integral constituents of the general mechanism of power in our society.

If one wants to look for a nondisciplinary form of power, or rather, to struggle against disciplines and disciplinary power, it is not towards the ancient right of sovereignty that one should turn, but towards the possibility of a new form of right, one which must indeed be antidisciplinarian, but at the same time liberated from the principle of sovereignty. It is at this point that we once more come up against the notion of repression, whose use in this context I believe to be doubly unfortunate. On the one hand, it contains an obscure reference to a certain theory of sovereignty, the sovereignty of the sovereign rights of the individual, and on the other hand, its usage introduces a system of psychological reference points borrowed from the human sciences, that is to say, from discourses and practices that belong to the disciplinary realm. I believe that the notion of repression remains a juridical-disciplinary notion whatever the critical use

one would make of it. To this extent the critical application of the notion of repression is found to be vitiated and nullified from the outset by the twofold juridical and disciplinary reference it contains to sovereignty on the one hand and to normalization on the other.

Notes

1. A deputy of the French Communist Party.

2. This Union, established after 1968, has adopted a radical line on civil rights, the law, and the prisons.

3

The Critique of Reason as an Unmasking of the Human Sciences: Michel Foucault

Jürgen Habermas

I

Foucault does not stand to Bataille, as Derrida does to Heidegger, in a relationship of disciple and successor. Even the external bond of a discipline within whose tradition both grew up together is lacking. Bataille took up ethnology and sociology without ever holding an academic post; Foucault was until his recent death Professor of the History of Systems of Thought at the Collège de France. Yet Foucault still calls Bataille one of his mentors. He is fascinated by Bataille as someone who stems the tide against the denaturing flood of enlightened discourse about sexuality and who wants to give back to both sexual and religious ecstasy their proper, specifically erotic meaning. But, above all, Foucault admires Bataille as someone who ranges texts in fiction and analysis, novels and reflection, alongside one another; someone who enriches the language with gestures of waste and excess and transgression of limits, in order to break out of the language of triumphant subjectivity. To a question about his mentors, Foucault gave the instructive response: "For a long time I was dominated by a badly resolved conflict between a passion for Blanchot and Bataille on the one hand, and an interest in certain positive studies like those of Dumézil and Lévi-Strauss on the other. But actually, both these directions, whose single common denominator is perhaps the religious problem, have contributed in the same fashion toward leading me to the idea of the disappearance of the subject."[1] Like many of his contemporaries, Foucault was also taken with the structuralist

revolution; it turned him, as it did Derrida, into a critic of the phenomenological-anthropological thought prevalent from Kojève till Sartre; and it was what first determined him in his choice of methods. He understood this "negative discourse about the subject" introduced by Lévi-Strauss to be at the same time a critique of modernity. But Nietzsche's motif of a critique of reason reached Foucault not via Heidegger, but through Bataille. Finally, he worked out these impulses not as a philosopher but as a student of Bachelard, and indeed as a historian of science who, in contrast to what is usual in that specialty, was more interested in the human sciences than in the natural sciences.

These three lines of tradition indicated by the names of Lévi-Strauss, Bataille, and Bachelard are joined together in the first book that made Foucault known outside the narrower circle of his fellow specialists. *Madness and Civilization* (1961) is a study of the prehistory and early history of psychiatry. The model of structuralist ethnology is noticeable in the means of analyzing discourse and in the methodical distantiation from one's own culture. The subtitle already lays claim to a critique of reason: *The History of Madness in the Age of Reason.* Foucault wants to show how the phenomenon of madness has been constituted as a mental illness since the end of the eighteenth century. With this goal in mind, he reconstructs the history of the rise of the discourse in which psychiatrists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries talk about madness. What makes this book more than a wide-ranging study of cultural history by a historian of science is a philosophical interest in madness as a phenomenon complementary to reason. A reason that has become monological holds madness at arm's length from itself so as safely to gain mastery of it as an object cleansed of rational subjectivity. Making madness clinical, which first renders mental illness a medical phenomenon, is analyzed by Foucault as an example of those processes of exclusion, proscription, and outlawing in whose traces Bataille had read the history of Western rationality.

In Foucault's hands, the history of science is enlarged into a history of reason because it studies the constituting of madness as a reflex image of the constituting of reason. Foucault declares programmatically that he wants "to write the history of the boundaries . . . by which a culture reprobates something that lies *outside* it."[2] He classi-

fies insanity among those limit experiences in which Western logos sees itself, with extreme ambivalence, faced with something heterogeneous. Boundary-transgressing experiences include contact with and even immersion in the Oriental world (Schopenhauer); rediscovery of the tragic element and of the archaic in general (Nietzsche); penetration of the dream sphere (Freud) and of archaic prohibitions (Bataille); even the exoticism nourished by anthropological reports. Foucault omits Romanticism from this list aside from one mention of Hölderlin.[3]

And yet in *Madness and Civilization* a Romantic motif comes through that Foucault will later give up. Just as Bataille discovers in the paradigmatic experience of ecstatic self-unbounding and orgiastic self-dissolution the eruption of heterogeneous forces into the homogeneous world of an everyday life that has been compulsively normalized, so Foucault suspects that behind the psychiatrically engendered phenomenon of mental illness, and indeed behind the various masks of madness at that time, there is something authentic whose sealed mouth need only be opened up: "One would have to bend an attentive ear to the whispers of the world and try to perceive the many images that have never been set down in poetry and the many fantasies that have never reached the colors proper to the waking state."[4]

Foucault recognizes immediately the paradoxicalness of the task of catching the truth of madness "as it bubbles up long before it gets apprehended by erudition," for "the act of perception that tries to apprehend these words in their unfettered state necessarily belongs to a world that already has it in its grip." Nonetheless, the author still has in mind an analysis of discourse that, in the manner of depth hermeneutics, probes its way back to the original point of the initial branching off of madness from reason in order to decipher what is unspoken in what is said.[5] This intention points in the direction of a negative dialectics that tries to break out of the enchanted circle of identifying thought by means of such thought itself, that pursues the history of the rise of instrumental reason back to the point of the primordial usurpation and of the split of a monadically hardening reason from mimesis, and then circles round this point, even if only in an aporetic fashion. But then Foucault would have to clamber about archeologically among the debris of an objective reason that

had been destroyed, from the mute testimony of which we might still retrospectively shape the perspective of a (long since revoked) hope for reconciliation. But this is Adorno's approach, not Foucault's.

One who desires to unmask nothing but the naked image of subject-centered reason cannot abandon himself to the dreams that befall this reason in its "anthropological slumber." Three years later, in the foreword to *The Birth of the Clinic,* Foucault calls himself to order. In the future, he will abstain from dealing with texts through commentary and give up all hermeneutics, no matter how deeply it may penetrate below the surface of the text. He no longer seeks madness itself behind discourse about madness, or the mute contact of body with eyes, which seemed to precede any discourse, behind the archaeology of the medical gaze. Unlike Bataille, he rejects any evocative access to the excluded and outlawed — heterogeneous elements no longer promise anything. A hermeneutics of unveiling always still connects a promise with its critique; a chastened archaeology should be rid of that: "Is it not possible to make a structural analysis of discourses that would evade the fate of commentary by supposing no remainder, nothing but the fact of its historical appearance? The facts of discourse would then have to be treated not as autonomous nuclei of multiple significations, but as events and functional segments gradually coming together to form a system. The meaning of a statement would be defined not by the treasure of intentions that it might contain, revealing and concealing at the same time, but by the difference that articulates it upon other real or possible statements, which are contemporary to it or to which it is opposed in a linear series of time. A systematic history of discourses would then become possible."[6] There is already a suggestion here of a conception of historical writing that Foucault, under the influence of Nietzsche, from the late 1960s set over against the human sciences — which are integrated into the history of reason and hence degraded — as a kind of antiscience. In the light of this conception, Foucault would assess his earlier work on madness (and the rise of clinical psychology) as well as on sickness (and the development of clinical medicine) as in part "blind attempts." Before getting into this, I want to point out some themes that establish a continuity in subject matter between the earlier and the later works.

II

In *Madness and Civilization,* Foucault already investigates the peculiar connection between discourses and practices. It is not a matter of the familiar attempt to explain the internally reconstructed evolution of science from conditions external to science. In place of the internal perspective of a problem-oriented theory of science, we find from the very beginning a structural description of selected conspicuous discourses which starts out in the gaps that are covered over by the approach of historians of ideas and problems; it is in such gaps that a new paradigm begins to establish itself in opposition to an old one. Moreover, the discourses of scientists are related to other discourses — those of philosophers and those of academically trained professionals such as physicians, judges, administrative officials, theologians, and educators. Of course, the human sciences, which form the stubbornly maintained reference point of Foucault's studies, do not only stand in the context of other discourses; far more important for the history of their emergence are the mute practices into which they are admitted. By the latter, Foucault understands the institutionally fixed and often even architecturally embodied or ritually sedimented regulations of modes of action and customs. Foucault builds into the concept of "practice" the moment of coercive, asymmetric influence over the freedom of movement of other participants in interaction. Legal judgments, police measures, pedagogical instructions, internment, discipline, checks and controls, forms of corporal and intellectual drill are examples of the intrusion of socializing, organizing forces into the quasi-natural substrate of bodily creatures. Foucault allows himself an altogether unsociological concept of the social. From the outset, he is interested in the human sciences as media that in modernity strengthen and promote the mysterious process of this socialization, that is, the investment with power of concrete, bodily mediated interactions. There is some unclarity, to begin with, regarding the problems of how discourses — scientific and nonscientific — are related to practices: whether one governs the other, whether their relationship is to be conceived as that of base to superstructure, or on the model of a circular causality, or as an interplay of structure and event.

Foucault also retained to the end the epochal divisions that articulate the history of madness. Against the background of a diffuse and not very clearly portrayed High Middle Ages, which in turn point toward the origins of Greek logos,[7] the contours of the Renaissance stand out more clearly. The latter, in turn, serves as a foil for the classical age (from the middle of the seventeenth until the end of the eighteenth century), portrayed lucidly and with sympathy. Thus, the end of the eighteenth century marks the peripeteia in the drama of the history of reason. It is the threshold of modernity shaped by Kantian philosophy and the new human sciences. Foucault bestows on these epochs, whose conventional names are due more to shifts in cultural and social history, a deeper meaning in accord with the changing constellations of reason and madness. He ascribes to the sixteenth century a certain self-critical restlessness and openness in dealing with the phenomenon of insanity. Reason still has an osmotic porosity — madness is still linked with the tragic and the prophetic and is a place of apocryphal truths; it has the function of a mirror that ironically unmasks the weaknesses of reason. To be disposed toward illusions pertains to the character of reason itself. During the Renaissance, all reversibility has not yet been expunged from the relation of reason to its other. Against this background, two processes take on the significance of watershed events in the history of reason: the great rash of confinements around the middle of the seventeenth century, when, for example, within a few months during the year 1656 every hundredth inhabitant of Paris was arrested and put into an institution; and then, at the close of the eighteenth century, the transformation of these places of incarceration and asylums into closed institutions with supervision by doctors for medically diagnosed mental illness — that is, the birth of the kind of psychiatric establishments that still exist today (and the dismantling of which is promoted by the antipsychiatry movement).

These two events (first, the involuntary confinement of the mad, the criminal, those without housing, libertines, the poor, and the eccentric of every kind, and later on, the erection of clinics for the treatment of mentally ill patients) signal two types of practices. Both serve to delimit heterogeneous elements out of that gradually stabilized monologue that the subject, raised in the end of the status of universal human reason, holds with itself through making everything

around it into an object. As in later studies, the comparison of the classical age with the modern age is central. Both types of exclusionary practices agree in forcing a separation and in rigorously erasing from the picture of madness those traits that are similar to reason. It is just that the indiscriminate confinement of every deviant only means a spatial segmentation of the wild and the fantastic, which are left to themselves; it does not yet mean a domesticating confrontation with a chaos that gives rise to anxiety and that has to be integrated into the order of nature and of humanity as suffering and pathology: "What the classical period has confined was not only an abstract unreason which mingled madmen and libertines, invalids, and criminals, but also an enormous reservoir of the fantastic, a dormant world of monsters supposedly engulfed in the darkness of Hieronymus Bosch which had spewed them forth."[8] Only in the late eighteenth century does the fear of a madness that could force its way outside through the cracks in the asylums grow, along with a compassion for those with nervous disorders and a feeling of guilt for associating them with dirty criminals and abandoning them to their fate. The clinical cleansing of asylums henceforth reserved for the sick goes hand in hand with the scientific objectification of insanity and the psychiatric treatment of the insane. This means at once a humanizing of suffering and a naturalizing of illness.[9]

Here we touch on a further theme that Foucault will pursue with ever greater intensity: the constitutive connection between the human sciences and the practices of supervisory isolation. The birth of the psychiatric institution and of the clinic in general is exemplary for a form of disciplining that Foucault will describe later on purely and simply as the modern technology of domination. The archetype of the closed institution, which Foucault initially discovers in the clinically transformed world of the asylum, turns up again in the forms of the factory, the prison, the barracks, the school, and the military academy. In these total institutions, which extinguish the quasi-natural differentiations of old European life and elevate the exceptional case of internment into a kind of normal form of "boarding," Foucault perceives the monuments to victory of a regulatory reason that no longer subjugates only madness, but also the needs and desires of the individual organism as well as the social body of an entire population.

A *gaze* that objectifies and examines, that takes things apart analytically, that monitors and penetrates everything, gains a power that is structurally formative for these institutions. It is the gaze of the rational subject who has lost all merely intuitive bonds with his environment and torn down all the bridges built up of intersubjective agreement, and for whom in his monological isolation, other subjects are only accessible as the objects of nonparticipant observation. This gaze is, as it were, architecturally congealed in the Panopticon sketched out by Bentham.[10]

The same structure is to be found at the cradle of the human sciences. It is no accident that these sciences, especially clinical psychology, but also pedagogy, sociology, political science, and cultural anthropology, can, as it were, frictionlessly intermesh in the overall technology of power that finds its architectural expression in the closed institution. They are translated into therapies and social techniques, and so form the most effective medium of the new, disciplinary violence that dominates modernity. They owe this to the fact that the penetrating gaze of the human scientist can occupy that centralized space of the panopticon from which one can look without being seen. In his study on the birth of the clinic, Foucault already conceived of the gaze of the anatomist, trained on the human corpse, as the "concrete apriori" of the sciences of man. In his history of madness, he already sensed the primordial affinity between the setup of the asylum and the doctor-patient relationship. In both, in the organization of the supervised institution and in the clinical observation of the patient, there is effected a division between seeing and being seen that links the idea of the clinic with the idea of the science of man. It is an idea that attains dominance at the same time as subject-centered reason: that killing off dialogical relationships transforms subjects, who are monologically turned in upon themselves, into objects for one another, and only objects.

Using the example of the reform movements that gave rise to psychiatric institutions and clinical psychology, Foucault works out the internal kinship between humanism and terror that endows his critique of modernity with its sharpness and mercilessness. In connection with the birth of the psychiatric institute from humanitarian ideas of the Enlightenment, Foucault demonstrates for the first time that "double movement of liberation and enslavement" which he

later recognizes along a broad front in the reforms of the penal system, the educational system, the health establishment, social welfare, and so forth. The freeing of the insane from the neglect of their places of confinement on humanitarian grounds, the creation of hygienic clinics under medical direction, the psychiatric treatment of the mentally ill, the right won by the latter to psychological understanding and therapeutic care — this was all made possible through an institutional ordinance preparing the patient to be an object of continuous supervision, manipulation, isolation, and regulation, and especially the object of medical research. The practices institutionally stabilized in the internal organization of life within these establishments are the basis for a knowledge of madness that first endows it with the objectivity of a fully conceptualized pathology and thus integrates it into the universe of reason. Psychiatric knowledge means an *ambiguous liberation,* in the sense of emancipation and elimination, not only for the patient, but also for the doctor, the practicing positivist: "The knowledge of madness presupposed on the part of those who possess it a specific way of ridding themselves of madness, of freeing themselves from the start from its dangers and its magic. . . . Originally this meant the fixation of a certain way of not being mad."[11]

I will not deal with these four themes in any detail. Instead, I will take up the question of whether Foucault succeeds in bringing off a radical critique of reason in the form of a historiography of the human sciences, which starts as archaeology and is expanded into genealogy, without getting caught in the aporias of this self-referential undertaking. The methodological problem of how a history of the constellations of reason and madness can be written at all, if the labor of the historian must in turn move about within the horizon of reason, remained just as unexplained in the early works as that of the relationship between discourses and practices. In the prefaces to his studies published at the start of the 1960s, Foucault poses himself this question without answering it; however, when he delivers his inaugural lecture at the Collège de France in 1970, it seems to have been solved in the meantime. Drawing a boundary between reason and madness turns up again here as one of the three mechanisms of exclusion in virtue of which rational speech is constituted. The elimination of madness stands midway between the more conspicuous

operations of keeping refractory speakers away from discourse, suppressing unpleasant themes, censoring certain expressions, and so on, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the altogether inconspicuous operation of distinguishing within the interaction of discourse between valid and invalid statements. Foucault concedes that at first glance it is implausible to conceive the rules for the elimination of false statements on the model of the delimitation of madness and the proscription of the heterogeneous: "How could one reasonably compare the constraints of the truth with those other divisions, arbitrary in origin if not developing out of historical contingency, in a state of continual flux, supported by a system of institutions imposing them and manipulating them, acting not without constraint, nor without an element, at least, of violence?"[12]

Naturally, Foucault does not allow himself to be influenced by the ostensible lack of coercion of the cogent argument by which truth claims, and validity claims in general, prevail. The appearance of nonviolence on the part of the better argument disappears as soon as one "considers it at a different level," by assuming the attitude of the archaeologist who directs his gaze at the buried foundations of meaning, at the infrastructures to be painstakingly excavated, which indeed first establish what is going to be considered true and false *inside* any discourse. Truth is an insidious mechanism of exclusion, because it only functions on condition that the *will to truth* prevalent within it remains hidden: "As though the will to truth were masked by truth itself and its necessary unfolding. . . . *True* discourse, liberated by the nature of its form from *desire* and *power,* is incapable of recognizing the *will to truth* that pervades it; and the will to truth, having imposed upon us for so long, is such that the truth it seeks to reveal cannot fail to mask it."[13]

The criteria of validity according to which what is true gets discriminated from what is false within a discourse abide in a unique transparency and appearance of having no origin whatsoever — validity has to strip away every element of the sheerly genetic, even its derivation from the basic rules constitutive of the discourse, which the archaeologist lays bare. So little can the structures that make truth possible themselves be true or false that one can only inquire about the function of the will that attains expression in them, and about the genealogy of this will from some network of the practices of

power. From the early 1970s, Foucault distinguished the archaeology of knowledge that uncovers the truth-constitutive rules of exclusion in any discourse from the genealogical investigation of the pertinent practices. Genealogy studies how discourses are formed and why they emerge and disappear again, by tracing the historically variable conditions of validity right to their institutional roots. Whereas archaeology follows the style of erudite ingenuity, genealogy cherishes a "felicitous positivism."[14] However, if archeology could proceed in learned fashion and genealogy in the mode of innocent positivism, then the methodological paradox of a science that writes the history of the human sciences with the goal of a radical critique of reason would be solved.

III

Foucault owes the concept of an erudite-positivistic historiography in the appearance of an antiscience to his reception of Nietzsche, which is set down in the introduction to *The Archeology of Knowledge* (1969) and in the essay "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" (1971). Philosophically considered, this concept seems to offer a promising alternative to the kind of critique of reason that had assumed the form of a temporalized *Ursprungsphilosophie* in Heidegger and Derrida. Now, of course, the entire weight of the problematic rests on the basic concept of power that lends both the archaeological prospecting and the genealogical disclosures their dimension of being a critique of modernity. Nietzsche's authority, from which this utterly unsociological concept of power is borrowed, is not enough to justify its systematic usage. The political context of Foucault's reception of Nietzsche — disappointment with the failure of the 1968 revolt — makes the concept of a historiography of the human sciences as a critique of reason biographically intelligible; but even this cannot ground the specific use of the concept of power with which he loads his paradoxical undertaking. The turn to a theory of power must, rather, be understood as an internally motivated attack on problems with which Foucault saw himself confronted after he had carried out his unmasking of the human sciences in *The Order of Things* using only the tools of discourse analysis. But let us first look at Foucault's appropriation of the concept of "genealogy."

Genealogical historiography can only take over the role of a critique of reason qua antiscience if it escapes from the horizon of just those historically oriented sciences of men whose hollow humanism Foucault wants to unmask in his theory of power. The new history has to negate all those presuppositions that have been constitutive for the historical consciousness of modernity and for philosophy of history and the historical Enlightenment since the end of the eighteenth century. This explains why Nietzsche's "Second Untimely Meditation" is a mine for Foucault. For, with a similar purpose in mind, Nietzsche had subjected the historicism of his time to a relentless attack.

Foucault wants (a) *to leave behind modernity's presentist consciousness of time.* He wants to break with the privileging of a present which is singled out under the pressure of the problems of facing the future responsibly, and to which the past is narcissistically related. Foucault settles accounts with the presentism of the kind of historiography that does not get beyond its hermeneutical initial situation and permits itself to be enlisted for the stabilizing assurance of an identity long since shattered. Consequently, genealogy is not supposed to search for an *origin,* but to uncover the contingent *beginnings* of discourse formations, to analyze the multiplicity of factual histories of derivation, and to dissolve the illusion of identity, especially the putative identity of the history-writing subject himself and of his contemporaries: "Where the soul pretends unification or the self fabricates a coherent identity, the genealogist sets out to study the beginning. . . . The analysis of descent permits the dissociation of self, its recognition and displacement as an empty synthesis, in liberating a profusion of lost events."[15]

There results from this (b) the methodocological consequence of *a parting with hermeneutics.* The new history makes use not of *Verstehen* but of the destruction and dismantling of that context of effective history which putatively links the historian with his object and with which he enters into communication only to find himself in it: "History must be detached from the image . . . through which it found its anthropological justification: that of an age-old collective consciousness that made use of material documents to refresh its memory."[16] Hermeneutical effort is aimed at the appropriation of meaning; in each document, it hunts out a voice reduced to silence

that should be roused into life again. This idea of a *document* pregnant with meaning has to be called into question just as radically as the business of interpretation itself. The "commentary" and its cognate fictions of the "work" and of the "author" as the originator of texts, as well as the tracing back of secondary to primary texts and in general the production of causal chains in intellectual history, are all instruments of an impermissible reduction of complexity; they are procedures for damming up the spontaneous upsurge of discourses which the later interpreter just wants to tailor to his own size and accommodate to his own provincial horizon of understanding. In contrast, the archeologist is going to change talkative documents into mute *monuments*, objects that have to be freed from their own context in order to become accessible to a structuralist description. The genealogist approaches the archaeologically excavated monuments from outside, in order to explain their derivation from the contingent ups and downs of battles, victories, and defeats. Only the historian who sovereignly disdains whatever discloses itself to the interpretation of meaning can undermine the foundational function of the knowing subject. He sees through, as sheer deceit, "the guarantee that everything that has eluded him may be restored to him; . . . the promise that one day the subject — in the form of historical consciousness — will once again be able to appropriate, to bring back under his sway, all those things that are kept at a distance by difference."[17]

The basic concepts of the philosophy of the subject dominate not only the type of access to the object domain, but also history itself. Hence Foucault wants above all (c) *to put an end to global historiography* that covertly conceives of history as a macroconsciousness. History in the singular has to be dissolved, not indeed into a manifold of narrative histories, but into a plurality of irregularly emerging and disappearing islands of discourse. The critical historian will first dissolve *false continuities* and pay attention to ruptures, thresholds, and changes in direction. He does not produce teleological contexts; he is not interested in the large causal chains; he does not count on syntheses and rejects out of hand principles of articulation such as progress and evolution; he does not divide history into epochs: "The project of a total history is one that seeks to constitute the overall form of a civilization, the principle — material or spiritual — of so-

ciety, the significance *common* to all the phenomena of a period, the law that accounts for their cohesion — what is metaphorically the 'face' of a period."[18] Instead of this, Foucault borrows from the "serial history" of the *Annales* school the programmatically deployed notions of a structuralist procedure that deals with a plurality of noncontemporaneous histories of systems and that shapes their analytic unities in terms of indicators remote from consciousness, that renounces in many cases the conceptual tools issued from the synthetic performances of a supposed consciousness, in other words, that abstains from the formation of totalities.[19] Thus also excluded is the idea of reconciliation, a legacy of the philosophy of history on which the critique of modernity stemming from Hegel still uninhibitedly nourished itself. The kind of history "whose function is to compose the finally reduced diversity of time into a totality fully closed upon itself; a history that always . . . attributes a form of reconciliation to all the displacements of the past; a history whose perspective on all that precedes it implies the end of time,"[20] receives a harsh denunciation.

From this destruction of a historiography that remains captive to anthropological thinking and basic humanistic convictions, there emerges the outline of a *transcendental historicism* at once inherited from and going beyond Nietzsche's critique of historicism. Foucault's radical historiography remains "transcendental" in a weak sense inasmuch as it understands the objects of the historical-hermeneutical interpretation of meaning as constituted — as objectivations of underlying discourse practices that are to be grasped by structuralist methods. The old history concerned itself with totalities of meaning that it made accessible from the internal perspectives of the participants. From this viewpoint, what *constitutes* such a world of discourse never comes into view. Only an archaeology that unearths a discursive practice down to its very roots sees what looks from the inside to be a totality from the outside, as something particular that could also be otherwise. Whereas participants understand themselves as subjects who relate to objects in general in accord with universal criteria of validity, without ever being able to transcend the perspicuous horizon of their world, the archeologist approaching from outside brackets this self-understanding. By going back to the rules constitutive of discourses, he ascertains the limits of any given universe of discourse; its form is *bounded* by the kinds of elements that it unconsciously

excludes as heterogeneous — and to this degree, the rules constitutive of discourses also function as a mechanism of exclusion. What is defined as out of bounds for any given discourse first makes possible the specific subject-object relations that are, however, viewed from within the discourse as universally valid, without any alternatives. In this respect, Foucault takes up the heritage of Bataille's heterology in his archaeology of knowledge. What differentiates him from Bataille is the merciless historicism before which even the prediscursive reference point of sovereignty dissolves. As little as the term "madness" (from the Renaissance down to positivistic psychiatry in the nineteenth century) indicates an authentic experiential potential this side of all the discourses about madmen, just as little does the other of reason, what is excluded as heterogeneous, retain the role of a prediscursive referent that could point to the coming arrival of a lost origin.[21]

Instead, the space of history is seamlessly filled by the absolutely contingent occurrence of the disordered flaring up and passing away of new formations of discourse. No place is left for any *overarching* meaning in this chaotic multitude of past totalities of discourse. The transcendental historicist looks as if into a kaleidoscope: "This kaleidoscope hardly reminds one of successive forms of a dialectical development; it is not explained by a progression of consciousness, nor yet by its descent, nor by the struggle between two principles: desire and repression — each flourish owes its bizarre shape to the space left it by the adjacent practices."[22]

Under the *stoic* gaze of the archeologist, history hardens into an iceberg covered with the crystalline forms of arbitrary formations of discourses. But since the autonomy proper to a totality without origin accrues to every single one of these formations, the only job left for the historian is that of the genealogist who explains the accidental provenance of these bizarre shapes from the hollow forms of bordering formations, that is, from the proximate circumstances. Under the *cynical* gaze of the genealogist, the iceberg begins to move: Discourse formations are displaced and regrouped, they undulate back and forth. The genealogist explains this to-and-fro movement with the help of countless events and a single hypothesis — the only thing that lasts is power, which appears with ever new masks in the change of anonymous processes of overpowering: "An 'event,' consequently,

is not a decision, a treaty, a reign, or a battle, but the reversal of a relationship of forces, the usurpation of power, the appropriation of a vocabulary turned against those who had once used it, a feeble domination that poisons itself as it grows lax, the entry of a masked other."[23] What the synthetic power of transcendental consciousness was hitherto supposed to accomplish for the one and general universe of the objects of possible experience — this synthesis — is now degraded into the subjectless will of a power effective in the contingent and disordered to-and-fro of discursive formations.

IV

Just as "life" was once elevated by Bergson, Dilthey, and Simmel to the basic transcendental concept of a philosophy (which still formed the background to Heidegger's analytics of Dasein), so Foucault now raises "power" to a basic transcendental-historicist concept of historiography as critique of reason. This characteristic is by no means trivial, and certainly not to be grounded on Nietzsche's authority alone. Using the concept of the history of Being as a contrasting background, I want first to study the role assumed by this vexing basic concept in Foucault's critique of reason.

Heidegger and Derrida want to advance Nietzsche's program of a critique of reason by way of a destruction of metaphysics; Foucault wants to do so by way of a destruction of historiography. Whereas the former surpass philosophy through an exorcising, evocative thinking beyond philosophy, Foucault oversteps the human sciences through a historiography that appears as an antiscience. Both sides neutralize the straightforwardly raised validity claims of the types of philosophical and scientific discourses they study by referring either to an epochal understanding of Being or to the formation rules for a given discourse. It is these that are supposed to first make possible the meaning of entities and the validity of statements within the horizon of a given world or of an established discourse. Both also agree that world horizons or discourse formations undergo change; but in these changes they maintain their transcendental power over whatever unfolds *within* the totalities shaped by them. This excludes a dialectical or circular feedback effect of either the ontic occurrence or the referents upon the history of the conditions of their possibility

— whether these conditions are construed ontologically or in terms of discourse formation. The history of the transcendentals and the change in world-disclosing horizons require concepts *different* from those appropriate for the ontic and historical dimensions. It is at this point that there is a parting of the ways.

Heidegger radicalizes the figures of thought of *Ursprungsphilosophie,* in which he preserves a vestige of confidence. He transfers the epistemic authority proper to the validity of truth to the process of the formation and transformation of world-disclosing horizons. The conditions making truth possible can themselves be neither true nor false, and yet a paravalidity is ascribed to the process of their changing; this is supposed to be conceived on the model of the validity of truth, as a heightened, historicized form of truth. Viewed in the light of day, Heidegger is proposing a curious alloy with his concept of the history of Being as a truth-occurrence. The authority of the history of Being is due to a fusion of meaning between validity claims free of coercion and imperious claims to power. This fusion lends to the subversive force of the insightful the imperative force of an illumination compelling one to one's knees. With a tiny vestige of confidence in the human sciences, Foucault avoids such a pseudoreligious twist by activating for his own purposes Bataille's heterological idea of de-limitation. He strips the history of discourse-constitutive rules of any authority based on validity and treats the transformation of transcendentally powerful discourse formations just as conventional historiography treats the ups and downs of political regimes. Whereas the archeology of knowledge (and in this it is similar to the destruction of the history of metaphysics) reconstructs the stratum of rules constitutive of discourse, genealogy strives to explain "the discontinuous succession of the sign-systems (ungrounded in themselves) that coerce people into the semantic framework of a determinate interpretation of the world"[24] — and indeed it explains the provenance of discourse formations from practices of power that are entwined with one another in the "risky game of overpowering."

In his later studies, Foucault will fill out this abstract concept of power in a more tangible way; he will comprehend power as the interaction of warring parties, as the decentered network of bodily, face-to-face confrontations, and ultimately as the productive penetra-

tion and subjectivizing subjugation of a bodily opponent. In our context, however, it is important to note how Foucault *joins* these palpable meanings of power *together* with the transcendental meaning of synthetic performances that Kant still ascribed to a subject and that structuralism now understands as an anonymous occurrence, namely, as a pure, decentered, rule-guided operation with the ordered elements of a suprasubjectively constructed system.[25] In Foucault's genealogy, "power" is initially a synonym for this *purely structuralistic activity;* it takes the same place that "différance" does in Derrida. But this power constitutive of discourse is supposed to be a power of transcendental generativity *and* of empirical self-assertion simultaneously. Like Heidegger, Foucault also undertakes a fusion of opposed meanings; but here an amalgam results that allows him to follow in the footsteps of Bataille and connect up with Nietzsche's critique of ideology. Heidegger wanted to hold onto the validity-grounding meaning of transcendental world disclosure in his concept of Being as a temporalized power of origin; but at the same time he wanted to eliminate the idealist element of something invariant that points beyond everything historical, beyond everything that is of the nature of a mere event — an element that is also usually found in the concept of the transcendental. Foucault owes his basic transcendental-historical concepts of power not only to this *one* paradoxical operation, which brings synthetic performances a priori back into the realm of historical events; he also undertakes three additional, equally paradoxical operations.

On the one hand, Foucault has to retain for his concept of power — which ironically conceals itself in discourse as the will to truth and at the same time makes itself felt therein — the transcendental meaning of a condition of the possibility of truth. On the other hand, he not only brings to bear against the Idealism of the Kantian concept a temporalizing of the a priori — so that new discourse formations, which push out the old, can emerge like *events* — but also strips this transcendental power of the connotations that Heidegger prudently leaves to an auratic history of Being. Foucault not only historicizes; his approach is at the same time nominalist, materialist, and empiricist. He thinks of the transcendental practices of power as something particular that strives against all universals, and further as the lowly corporeal-sensual that undermines everything intelligible, and

finally as the contingent that could also have been otherwise because it is not governed by any regulative order. In Heidegger's later philosophy, it is not easy to pin down the paradoxical consequences of a fundamental concept contaminated by contrary meanings, because meditation upon a Being from time immemorial eludes assessment on the basis of testable criteria. In contrast, Foucault exposes himself to palpable objections, because his historiography, despite its anti-scientific tenor, seeks to proceed both "eruditely" and "positivistically." As a result, genealogical historiography can scarcely hide the paradoxical consequences of a basic concept that is similarly contaminated, as we shall see below. There is all the more need to explain why Foucault resolves upon heading his theory of science oriented to a critique of reason onto the path of a theory of power.

From a biographical standpoint, Foucault's motives for taking up Nietzsche's theory of power could be different from Bataille's. Both started out on the political left, and both put increasingly more distance between themselves and Marxist orthodoxy. But only Foucault experienced *sudden* disappointment with a political engagement. In interviews of the early 1970s, Foucault revealed the vehemence of his break with earlier convictions. At that time, he joined the choir of disappointed Maoists of 1968 and was taken by the moods to which one must look if one wants to explain the remarkable success of the New Philosophers in France.[26] Were one to believe it possible to reduce his central ideas to this context, one would surely be underestimating Foucault's originality. At any rate, these external political impulses could not have set anything in motion at the innermost core of the theory, if the dynamism of the theory itself had not (long before his experiences with the revolt of 1968) given rise to the idea that discursive mechanisms of exclusion not only reflect self-sufficient structures of discourse, but carry out imperatives for heightening power. The idea arose in the problematic situation that Foucault faced after the conclusion of his work on the archeology of the human sciences.

In *The Order of Things* (1966), Foucault investigates the modern forms of knowledge (or epistemes) that establish for the sciences their unsurpassable horizons of basic concepts (one could also say: that establish the historical a priori of the understanding of Being). In the history of modern thought, just as in the history of madness,

the two historical thresholds of the transition from the Renaissance to the classical age and from the classical age to the modern age are at the center of interest. The internal motivations behind the transition to a theory of power can be understood in connection with the difficulties that emerged from this ingenious study itself.

V

The thought of the Renaissance was still guided by a cosmological world view in which things were ordered in, so to speak, a physiognomic way according to relations of similarity, since in the great Book of Nature each signature refers to other signatures. The rationalism of the seventeenth century imports a completely different order into things. The logic of Port-Royal is structurally formative; it projects a semiotics and a general combinatory system. Nature is transformed for Descartes, Hobbes, and Leibniz into the totality of what can be "represented" in a twofold sense — that is, what can be represented and can also, as a representation, be presented by means of conventional signs. Foucault contends that the decisive paradigm for this is neither the mathematization of nature nor the mechanistic perspective, but the system of ordered signs. The latter is no longer grounded in a *prior* order of things, but is what first produces a taxonomic order by way of the representation of things. Combined signs or language form a fully transparent medium by which the representation is linked with whatever is represented. The signifier retreats behind the indicated thing signified; it functions like a glass instrument for representation without having a life of its own: "The profound vocation of Classical language has always been to create a table — a 'picture': whether it be in the form of natural discourse, the accumulation of truth, descriptions of things, a body of exact knowledge, or an encyclopaedic dictionary. It exists, therefore, only to be transparent. . . . The possibility of knowing things and their order passes, in the Classical experience, through the sovereignty of words: words are, in fact, neither marks to be deciphered (as in the Renaissance period) nor more or less faithful and masterable instruments (as in the positivist period); they form rather a colourless network on the basis of which . . . representations are ordered."[27] Thanks to its autonomy, the sign *selflessly* serves the representation of things; in it, the repre-

sentation of the subject encounters the represented object and they form an order in the chain of representations.

Language is wholly given up to its function of picturing facts, as we would put it today, and depicts everything that can be represented on the *same* level — the nature of the subject doing the representing no differently from that of the objects being represented. On its tableau, the nature of man enjoys no privilege over the nature of things. Internal and external nature are classified, analyzed, and combined in the same manner — words of language in the universal grammar, wealth and needs in political economy, no differently than species of plants and animals in the Linnaean system. Precisely this is the limit of the nonreflexive form of knowledge proper to the classical age; knowledge is completely dependent on the representational structure of language, without being able to integrate the process of representation itself (the synthetic performance of the subject doing the representing). Foucault elaborates this limit in his surprising interpretation of a famous picture by Velázquez, *Las Meninas*.[28]

This picture portrays the painter in front of a canvas not visible to the spectator; the painter is evidently looking, as are the two ladies-in-waiting next to him, in the direction of his two models, King Philip IV and his spouse. These two personages standing as models are found outside the frame of the picture; they can be identified by the spectator only with the help of a mirror pictured in the background. The point that Velázquez apparently had in mind is a confusing circumstance of which the spectator becomes aware by inference: The spectator cannot avoid assuming the place and the direction of the gaze of the counterfeit but absent royal pair — toward which the painter captured in the picture gazes — as well as the place and the perspective of Velázquez himself, which is to say, of the painter who actually produced this picture. For Foucault, in turn, the real point lies in the fact that the classical picture frame is too limited to permit the representation of the act of representing as such — it is this that Velázquez makes clear by showing the gaps within the classical picture frame left by the lack of reflection on the process of representing itself.[29] None of the persons who are involved in the classical scene of a painted representation of the royal pair (of human beings as sovereign) appear in the depiction as the sovereign subject capable

of self-representation, or in other words, as subject and object at once, as simultaneously representing and being represented, as an entity present to itself in the process of representation: "In Classical thought, the personage for whom the representation exists, and who represents himself within it, recognizing himself therein as an image or reflection, he who ties together all the interlacing threads of the 'representation in the form of a picture or table' — he is never to be found himself. Before the end of the eighteenth century, *man* did not exist. . . . Of course, it is possible to object that general grammar, natural history, and the analysis of wealth were all . . . ways of recognizing the existence of man. . . . But there was no *epistemological* consciousness of man as such."[30]

With Kant, the modern age is inaugurated. As soon as the metaphysical seal on the correspondence between language and world breaks down, the representational function of language itself becomes a problem. The subject doing the representing has to objectify himself to gain some clarity about the problematic process of representation itself. The concept of self-reflection takes over, and the relationship to self of the subject doing the representing becomes the single foundation of ultimate certainties. The end of metaphysics is the end of an objective coordination of things and representations that is performed by language itself and thus remains unproblematic. The human person, become present to himself in self-consciousness, has to assume the superhuman task of establishing an order of things as soon as he becomes aware of himself as an existence at once autonomous and finite. This is why Foucault regards the modern form of knowledge as marked from the very start by the aporia that the knowing subject raises itself up out of the ruins of metaphysics in order, in the consciousness of his finite powers, to solve a task requiring infinite power. Kant turns this aporia straightaway into a principle of construction of his epistemology by shifting the meaning of the constraints proper to a finite cognitive capacity into that of transcendental conditions of a knowledge that advances without limit: "Modernity begins with the incredible and ultimately unworkable idea of a being who is sovereign precisely by virtue of being enslaved, a being whose very finitude allows him to take the place of God."[31]

Foucault develops his basic idea that modernity is characterized by the self-contradictory and anthropocentric form of knowledge proper to a structurally overloaded subject (a finite subject transcending itself into the infinite) in a wide arc that stretches from Kant and Fichte to Husserl and Heidegger. Philosophy of consciousness is subject to conceptual constraints under which it must "double" the subject and continually treat it in terms of two contrary and mutually incompatible aspects. The pressure to break out of this unstable to and fro between aspects of self-thematization that are just as irreconcilable as they are inevitable makes itself felt as the intractable will to knowledge and ever more knowledge. This will pretentiously shoots beyond anything the structurally overburdened and overstrained subject is capable of performing. In this way, the modern form of knowledge is determined by the unique dynamism of a *will to truth* for which any frustration is only a spur to the renewed production of knowledge. This will to truth, then, is for Foucault the key to the internal nexus between knowledge and power. The human sciences occupy the terrain opened up by the aporetic self-thematization of the cognitive subject. With their pretentious and never redeemed claims, they erect a facade of universally valid knowledge behind which lurks the facticity of a sheer will to cognitive self-mastery, a will to a boundlessly productive increase of knowledge in the wake of which both subjectivity and self-consciousness are first formed.

Foucault traces the compulsion toward the problematic "doubling" of the self-related subject primarily in connection with three sets of oppositions: between the transcendental and the empirical; between the act of becoming reflectively aware and the reflectively unsurpassable and irretrievable; and finally between the a priori perfect of an "always already" prior origin and the adventlike future of the still-to-come return of the origin. Foucault would have been able to exhibit these oppositions in connection with Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre,* since it is precisely a matter of those kinds of conceptual constraints of the philosophy of consciousness that are condensed paradigmatically into the *Tathandlung* [reflective conscious activity] of the absolute I. The I can only take possession of itself and "posit" itself by positing, as it were unconsciously, a not-I and trying gradually to retrieve this thing posited by the I. This act of mediated self-

positing can be understood under three different aspects: as a process of self-knowledge, as a process of growing reflective awareness, and as a process of self-formation. In each of these dimensions, European thought of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries sways between theoretical approaches that mutually exclude one another — and in each case the attempt to evade unhappy alternatives ends in the snares of a self-deifying subject consuming itself in acts of vain self-transcendence.

Since Kant, the I assumes simultaneously the status of an empirical subject in the world, where it is available as one object among others, and the status of a transcendental subject over against the world as a whole, which it constitutes as the totality of the objects of possible experience. By reason of this double status,[32] the knowing subject sees itself provoked to analyze the same performances that one time get grasped reflectively as performances of transcendental synthesis, and a second time empirically as a process governed by natural laws — no matter whether our cognitive apparatus is explained in terms of psychology or cultural anthropology, biology or history. Naturally, thought cannot rest satisfied with these irreconcilable alternatives. The attempts at overcoming this dilemma in a discipline uniting both aspects and conceiving the concrete history of the a priori forms as a process of the self-creation of the spirit or of the species reaches from Hegel to Merleau-Ponty. Because these hybrid enterprises chase after the utopia of complete self-knowledge, they flip-flop again and again into positivism.[33]

Foucault uncovers the same dialectic in the second dimension of self-positing. Since Fichte, the I, as the reflecting subject, undergoes the twofold experience of encountering itself in the world "always already" as something that has become itself contingently, as something opaque, on the one hand; but, on the other hand, as being endowed by precisely this reflection with the ability to make that "in itself" transparent and to elevate it into consciousness "for itself." The attempts to advance this process of making oneself conscious of what is pre-given and to find a methodological standpoint from which anything that prima facie resists consciousness as something stubbornly extraterritorial (be it the body, needs and desires, labor, or language) might still be retrieved in reflection, made familiar, and transformed into something transparent, extend from Hegel via

Freud to Husserl. Freud puts forward the imperative that where Id is, Ego shall be. Husserl sets pure phenomenology the goal of explaining and bringing under conscious control everything merely implicit, prepredicative, already sedimented, not actually present — in brief, the unthought and hidden foundation of the performing subjectivity. These hybrid attempts at emancipation from what is unconsciously in the background fall prey to the utopia of complete self-transparency and hence flip over into nihilistic despair and radical scepticism.

The desire to elude the third double — of the subject as something originally creative and at the same time as alienated from this origin — leads in the end to the same dialectic. The human being knows itself as the remote product of a history reaching back into the archaic, of which it is not master, even though this history refers in turn to the authorship of producing human beings. The more energetically modern thought pursues them, the further back these origins retreat: "Paradoxically it proposes the solution of advancing even further in the direction of this ever-deepening retreat." To this, the philosophy of history from Schelling via Marx to Lukács responds with the idea of an enriching return from alien lands, of an Odyssey of the spirit; on the other hand, Dionysian thought from Hölderlin via Nietzsche to Heidegger responds with the idea of the God who recedes, "who frees the origin in exactly that degree to which he recedes."[34] But these hybrid notions of history can only become practical in the form of terror, self-manipulation, and enslavement, since they live from a false eschatological impulse.

Foucault also classifies the human sciences with that anthropocentric thinking which was set in motion by Kant and which, with its utopias of liberation, gets implicated in the practice of enslavement. He cautiously leaves to the experimental natural sciences a special status; they have obviously extricated themselves from the web of practices from which they issued (primarily the practices of the judicial hearing) and have been able to attain a certain autonomy. It is different with the human sciences. Grammar, natural history, and economics, which arose already in the classical age as taxonomic sciences, were the first to come under the sway of the anthropological turn. General grammar gives way to the history of national languages, tables of natural history to the evolution of species, and the analysis

of wealth to a theory that traces use-value and exchange-value back to the expenditure of labor power. A perspective arose in which *the human being* was perceived as a *speaking* and *laboring* creature. The human sciences made use of this perspective; they analyzed the human being as the being that relates itself to objectivations engendered by itself, the speaking and laboring creature. Inasmuch as psychology, sociology, and political science on the one hand, and the cultural sciences and humanities on the other, got involved with object domains for which subjectivity (in the sense of the relation to self of experiencing, acting, and speaking human beings) is constitutive, they found themselves in the wake of the will to knowledge, on the escape route of a boundless productive increase in knowledge. They were delivered up to the dialectic of liberation and enslavement, more defenselessly than the science of history, which at least had control over the sceptical potential of historical relativization; but especially more defenselessly than ethnology or psychoanalysis, for these have (since Lévi-Strauss and Lacan) moved about reflectively in the jungle of the structural and of the individual unconscious.

Because the human sciences — psychology and sociology above all — with their *borrowed* models and *alien* ideals of objectivity, became involved with a human being that was for the first time turned into an object of scientific investigation by the modern form of knowledge, an impulse could prevail in them unawares, which they could not admit without risking their claim to truth: just that restless pressure for knowledge, self-mastery, and self-aggrandizement with which the subject — metaphysically isolated and structurally overburdened, abandoned by God and self-deifying — of the postclassical age sought to avoid the aporias of its self-thematization. "We are inclined to believe that man has emancipated himself from himself since his discovery that he is not at the center of creation, nor in the middle of space, nor even, perhaps, the summit and culmination of life; but though man is no longer sovereign in the kingdom of the world, though he no longer reigns at the center of being, the human sciences are dangerous intermediaries."[35] Mere intermediaries because they, unlike the reflective sciences and philosophy, do not directly promote that self-destructive dynamic of the self-positing subject, but get unconsciously instrumentalized for it. The human sciences are

and remain pseudosciences because they do not see through the compulsion to a problematic doubling of the self-relating subject; they are not in a position to acknowledge the structurally generated will to self-knowledge and self-reification — and thus they are also unable to free themselves from the power that drives them. Foucault already depicted this in *Madness and Civilization* in connection with the example of psychiatric positivism.

What, then, are the grounds that determine Foucault to shift the meaning of this specific will to knowledge and to truth that is constitutive for the modern form of knowledge in general, and for the human sciences in particular, by *generalizing* this will to knowing self-mastery into a will to power per se and to postulate that *all* discourses (by no means only the modern ones) can be shown to have the character of hidden power and derive from practices of power? It is this assumption that first marks the turning from an archeology of knowledge to a genealogical explanation of the provenance, rise, and fall of those discourse formations that fill the space of history, without gaps and without meaning.

Notes

1. Michel Foucault, *Von der Subversion des Wissens* (Munich, 1974), p. 24. [From an interview with Paolo Caruso.]

2. Michel Foucault, *Wahnsinn und Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt, 1969), p. 9. [This is a translation of *Histoire de la folie,* an abridged edition of which was translated into English as *Madness and Civilization.* The English edition does not include the passage cited.]

3. Schelling and the Romantic philosophy of nature had earlier conceived of madness as the other of reason brought about by excommunication, but of course within a perspective of reconciliation alien to Foucault. To the extent that the bond of communication between the madman (or the criminal) and the rationally constituted context of public life is severed, both parts suffer a deformation — those who are now thrown back upon the compulsive normality of a reason that is merely subjective are no less disfigured than those expelled from normality. Madness and evil negate normality by endangering it in two ways — as what disrupts normality and puts it in question; but also as something that evades normality by withdrawing from it. The insane and the criminal can develop this power of active negation only as inverted reason, which is to say, thanks to those moments split off from communicative reason.

Foucault, along with Bataille and Nietzsche, renounces this figure of thought from Idealism, which is supposed to grasp a dialectic inherent in reason itself. For him, rational forms of discourse are always rooted in strata that limit monological reason. These mute foundations of meaning at the basis of Occidental rationality are themselves meaningless; they have to be exhumed like the nonlinguistic monuments of prehistory if reason is to come to light in interchange with and in opposition to its other. In this sense, the archeologist is the model of a historian of science investigating the history of reason, having learned from Nietzsche that reason develops its structure only by way of the exclusion of heterogeneous elements and only by way of a monadic centering within itself. There was no reason before monological reason. And so madness does not appear to be the result of a process of splitting off in the course of which communicative reason first became rigidified into subject-centered reason. The formative process of madness is simultaneously that of a reason which emerges in none other than the Occidental form of self-relating subjectivity. This "reason" proper to German Idealism, which was meant to be more primordial than that embodied within European culture, appears here as just that fiction by which the Occident makes itself known in its specialness, and with which it assumes a universality that is chimerical, at the same time that it both hides and pursues its claim to global dominance.

4. Foucault, *Wahnsinn und Gesellschaft,* p. 13. [The English edition, *Madness and Civilization,* does not include the passage cited.]

5. "Since we lack the original purity, our investigation of structure has to go back to that decisive point which separates reason and madness at the same time as it joins them. It must seek to uncover the constant interchange, the opaque common root, and the original opposition that bestows a meaning on the unity as well as the opposition between sense and nonsense. Thus, the lightning decision (which seems heterogeneous from inside historical time, but inconceivable outside it) which separates the buzzing of obscure insects from the language of reason and the promises of time can come to light again." (Ibid., p. 13)

6. Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (New York, 1973), p. xvii.

7. Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization* (New York, 1973), chapter 1, pp. 3ff. (In the discussion that follows, I was unable to take into account the second and third volumes of Foucault's *History of Sexuality,* which have just appeared.)

8. Ibid., p. 209.

9. Foucault gives an impressive description of an asylum that underwent profound changes in visage and function, under the eyes, so to speak, of the psychiatrists, in the waning days of the eighteenth century: "This village had once signified that madmen were confined, and therefore the man of reason was

protected from them; now it manifested that the [separated] madman was liberated, and that, in this liberty which put him on the level with the laws of reason, he was reconciled with the man of reason. . . . Without anything at the institutions having really changed, the meaning of exclusion and of confinement begins to alter; it slowly assumes positive values, and the neutral, empty, nocturnal space in which unreason was formerly restored to its nothingness begins to be peopled by a [medically controlled] nature to which madness, liberated, is obliged to submit [as pathology]." (Ibid., p. 195. The parenthetic additions are mine.)

10. "At the periphery, an annular building; at the centre, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other. All that is needed, then, is to place a supervisor in a central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy. By the effect of backlighting, one can observe from the tower, standing out precisely against the light, the small captive shadows in the cells of the periphery. They are like so many cages, so many small theatres, in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible." (Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* [New York, 1977], p. 200.) Of the functions of the old-fashioned prison — incarceration, darkening, concealing — only the first is maintained: Restriction of space for mobility is needed to fulfill the, as it were, experimental conditions for the installation of the reifying gaze: "The panopticon is a machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad: in the peripheric ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen." (Ibid., p. 202.)

11. Foucault, *Wahnsinn und Gesellschaft,* p. 480. [The English edition, *Madness and Civilization,* does not include the passage cited.]

12. Michel Foucault, "The Discourse on Language," appendix to *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* (New York, 1972), at pp. 217–218.

13. Ibid., p. 219.

14. Ibid., p. 234.

15. Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews* (Ithaca, 1977), at pp. 145–146.

16. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* p. 7.

17. Ibid., p. 12.

18. Ibid., p. 9.

19. C. Honegger, "M. Foucault und die serielle Geschichte," *Merkur* 36(1982): 501ff.

20. Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," p. 152.

21. For Foucault's self-critique, see *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* p. 16. "Generally speaking, *Madness and Civilization* accorded far too great a place, and an enigmatic one too, to what I called an 'experiment,' thus showing to what an extent one was still close to admitting an anonymous and general subject of history."

22. Paul Veyne, *Der Eisberg der Geschichte* (Berlin, 1981), p. 42. Veyne's metaphor reminds one of Gehlen's image of "crystallization."

23. Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," p. 154.

24. Axel Honneth, *Kritik der Macht* (Frankfurt, 1985), pp. 121–122 [English translation forthcoming].

25. H. Fink-Eitel, "Foucaults Analytik der Macht," in I. A. Kittler, ed., *Austreibung des Geistes aus den Geisteswissenschaften* (Paderborn, 1980), p. 55.

26. For example, in an enthusiastic review of André Glucksmann's *Master Thinkers,* Foucault writes: "In the Gulag one sees not the consequences of an unhappy mistake, but the effects of the 'truest' theory in the political order. Those who sought to save themselves by sticking Marx's true beard on the false nose of Stalin were not enthused." (Michel Foucault, "La grande colère des faits," *Le Nouvel Observateur,* 9 May 1977.) The theories of power of bourgeois pessimists from Hobbes to Nietzsche have always also served as receiving stations for disappointed apostates who, in the business of realizing their ideals politically, experienced how the humanistic content of the Enlightenment and of Marxism was perverted into its barbaric opposite. Even if the year 1968 only marks a revolt and not a revolution as in 1789 or 1917, the syndromes of reneging on the left are actually quite similar and perhaps even explain the surprising circumstance that the New Philosophers in France have dealt with *topoi* similar to those of the neoconservative disciples of an older generation of disappointed communists. On both sides of the Atlantic, one runs up against the same *topoi* of the counter-Enlightenment: criticism of the seemingly inevitable terrorist consequences of global interpretations of history; critique of the role of the general intellectual intervening in the name of human reason, and also of the transposition of theoretically pretentious human sciences into a practice contemptuous of humans, either in terms of social technique or therapeutically. The figure of thought is always the same: There is a narrow-minded will to power ingrained in the very universalism of the Enlightenment, in the humanism of emancipatory ideals, and in the rational pretension of systematic thought; as soon as the theory is ready to become practical, it throws off its mask — behind which the will to power of the philosophical master thinkers, the intellectuals, the mediators of meaning — in brief, the New Class — comes to the fore. Foucault not only seems

to represent these familiar motifs with a gesture of radicality, but actually to *sharpen* them with his critique of reason and to *generalize* them with his theory of power. Behind the emancipatory self-understanding of discourse in the human sciences lurks the tactic and the technology of a sheer will to self-assertion, which the genealogist sets into relief beneath the exhumed foundations of meaning of self-deceptive discourses, just as Solzhenitsyn did to the Gulag beneath the rhetoric of a sanctimonious Soviet Marxism. See P. Rippel and H. Münkler, "Der Diskurs und die Macht. Zur Nietzsche-Rezeption des Poststrukturalismus," *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 23(1982):115ff.

27. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York, 1973), p. 311.

28. See Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago, 1983), pp. 21ff.

29. Foucault constructs two different series of absences. On the one hand, the painter in the picture lacks his model, the royal couple standing outside the frame of the picture; the latter are in turn unable to see the picture of themselves that is being painted — they only see the canvas from behind; finally, the spectator is missing the center of the scene, that is, the couple standing as models, to which the gaze of the painter and of the courtesans merely directs us. Still more revealing than the absence of the objects being represented is, on the other hand, that of the subjects doing the representing, which is to say, the triple absence of the painter, the model, and the spectator who, located in front of the picture, takes in perspectives of the two others. The painter, Velázquez, actually enters into the picture, but he is not presented exactly in the act of painting — one sees him during a pause and realizes that he will disappear behind the canvas as soon as he takes up his labors again. The faces of the two models can actually be recognized unclearly in a mirror reflection, but they are not to be observed directly during the act of their portrayal. Finally, the act of the spectator is equally unrepresented — the spectator depicted entering into the picture from the right cannot take over this function. (See Foucault, *The Order of Things*, pp. 3–16, 307–311.)

30. Ibid., pp. 308–309.

31. Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*, p. 30.

32. Dieter Henrich, *Fluchtlinien* (Frankfurt, 1982), pp. 125ff.

33. This might also explain why materialism can remain so alive in analytic philosophy, particularly in relation to the mind-body problem.

34. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, pp. 333–334.

35. Ibid., p. 348.

4

Some Questions Concerning the Theory of Power: Foucault Again

Jürgen Habermas

I

With the dynamism of self-mastery through the production of knowledge, the archaeology of the human sciences not only furnishes the starting point for intertwining knowledge with the will to knowledge; *The Order of Things* raises problems to which Foucault responds some years later by developing out of the will to knowledge the basic concept of power on which his genealogical historiography is based. Let me indicate three such difficulties.

(a) First of all, Foucault must have been irritated by the affinity that obviously existed between his archaeology of the human sciences and Heidegger's critique of the metaphysics of the modern age. The epistemes or forms of knowledge of the Renaissance, classicism, and modernity indicate epochal divisions and at the same time stages in the formation of the same subject-centered understanding of Being that Heidegger, using similar concepts, analyzed from Descartes via Kant to Nietzsche. Foucault, however, could not take the path of overcoming subjectivity through a critique of metaphysics; he had shown that even the concept of the history of Being does not lead out of the circle of the third self-thematization of the self-referential subject, that is, its attempt to master an ever-receding origin. The thesis was that Heidegger's later philosophy is still caught in the Chinese puzzle that Foucault discussed under the title "Recession and Return of the Origin." For this reason, Foucault will henceforth have to do without the concept of episteme altogether.

(b) Just as problematic as his proximity to Heidegger is his nearness to structuralism. In *The Order of Things,* Foucault wanted to respond with a liberating philosophical laugh to all "those who refuse to formalize without anthropologizing, who refuse to mythologize without demystifying," and in general to "all these warped and twisted forms of reflection."[1] With this gesture, reminiscent of the laughter of Zarathustra, he wanted to rouse from their anthropological slumbers all "who refuse to think without immediately thinking that it is man who is thinking." They were supposed to rub their eyes and ask the simple question whether man exists at all.[2] Evidently Foucault then regarded contemporary structuralism (Lévi-Strauss's ethnology and Lacan's psychoanalysis) as alone capable of thinking "the void left by man's disappearance." The originally planned subtitle for the book, "Archaeology of Structuralism," was by no means intended critically. But this perspective had to dissolve as soon as it became clear that structuralism had covertly already supplied the model for the description of the classical form of knowledge (semiotic representationalism).[3] Thus, overcoming anthropocentric thought by means of structuralism would not have meant a surpassing of modernity, but only an explicit renewal of the protostructuralist form of knowledge of the classical age.

(c) A further embarrassment arose from the circumstance that Foucault carried out his study of the rise of the human sciences in the form — and only in the form — of an archaeology of knowledge. How could this analysis of scientific discourse be combined with the investigation of relevant practices familiar from earlier studies without endangering the self-sufficiency of forms of knowledge rounded off into totalities? Foucault deals with this problem in his methodological considerations on *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969). He does not reach a completely unequivocal position there, but tends toward the superordination of discourses over the practices on which they are based. The structuralist requirement that each unity of discourse be understood strictly in terms of itself seems to be satisfied only if the rules constitutive of discourse assume control, as it were, of their institutional basis. Discourse is what first links the technological, economic, social, and political conditions to the functioning network of practices that then serve to reproduce it.

Such discourse — totally autonomous, detached from contextual constraints and functional conditions, guiding the underlying practices — clearly suffers from a conceptual difficulty. What then counts as fundamental are the rules (accessible to archaeology) that make possible the ongoing discursive practice. However, these rules can make a discourse comprehensible only as regards its conditions of possibility; they do not suffice to explain the discourse practice in its actual functioning — for there are no rules that could govern their own application. A rule-governed discourse cannot itself govern the context in which it is implicated: "Thus, although nondiscursive influences in the form of social and institutional practices, skills, pedagogical practices and concrete models (e.g., Bentham's Panopticon) constantly intrude into Foucault's analysis . . . he must locate the productive power revealed by discursive practices in the regularity of these same practices. The result is the strange notion of regularities which regulate themselves."[4]

Foucault escapes this difficulty when he gives up the autonomy of the forms of knowledge in favor of their foundation within power technologies and *subordinates* the archaeology of knowledge to the genealogy that explains the emergence of knowledge from practices of power.

This theory of power also recommends itself for the solution of the two other problems: Foucault can thereby relinquish the philosophy of the subject without depending on models from structuralism or the history of Being, which, according to his own analysis, are themselves captive to either the classical or the modern form of knowledge. Genealogical historiography clears away the autonomy of self-regulating discourses as well as the epochal and linear succession of global forms of knowledge. The danger of anthropocentrism is banished only when, under the incorruptible gaze of genealogy, discourses emerge and pop like glittering bubbles from a swamp of anonymous processes of subjugation. With his energetic reversal of the relationships of dependency among forms of knowledge and practices of power, Foucault opens up a problematic of social theory in contrast to the rigorously structuralist history of systems of knowledge, and a naturalistic problematic in contrast to the history of the understanding of Being (as a critique of metaphysics). The discourses of the sciences, and in general the discourses in which knowledge is

shaped and transmitted, lose their privileged status; together with other discursive practices, they form power complexes that offer a domain of objects sui generis. In going through the types of discourse and forms of knowledge, the point now is to uncover the technologies of subjugation around which a dominant power complex draws together, achieves domination, and is ultimately suppressed by the next power complex. Historical research into the power technologies that instrumentalize systems of knowledge right down to their criteria of validity is supposed to move now on the firm ground of a naturalistic theory of society.

Of course, Foucault only gains this basis by not thinking genealogically when it comes to his *own* genealogical historiography and by rendering unrecognizable the derivation of this transcendental-historicist concept of power.

As we have seen, with respect to the human sciences, Foucault had studied the form of knowledge that appears with the claim of purifying the intelligible from everything empirical, accidental, and particular, and that becomes especially suitable as a medium of power precisely on account of this pretended separation of validity from genesis: Because it thus posits itself absolutely, modern knowledge can conceal from itself and others that impulse which first spurs on a metaphysically isolated subject, thrown back reflectively upon itself, toward restless self-mastery. This will to knowledge was supposed to intervene in the constitution of scientific discourse and explain why scientifically prepared knowledge of man can congeal directly into disciplinary violence in the form of therapies, expert opinions, social technologies, curricula, tests, research reports, data banks, proposals for reform, etc. This modern will to knowledge determines "the ensemble of rules according to which the true and the false are separated and specific effects of power attached to the true."[5] With his transition to a theory of power, however, Foucault detaches this will to knowledge from the context of the history of metaphysics and lets it merge into the category of power in general. This transformation is due to two operations. To begin with, Foucault postulates a will constitutive of truth for *all* times and *all* societies: "Every society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true."[6] Beyond this spatiotemporal generalization, Foucault undertakes a substantive

neutralization: He de-differentiates the will to knowledge into a will to power that is supposed to be inherent in all discourses, not just those that specialize in truth, in a manner similar to that in which the will to self-mastery specific to modern subjectivity inheres in the human sciences. Only after the traces of this transformation are erased can the will to knowledge show up again (in the subtitle to *The History of Sexuality,* 1976), now of course demoted to a special case — the "dispositive of truth" now appears as one among many "dispositives of power."

The *concealed* derivation of the concept of power from the concept of the will to knowledge (originally formulated in terms of a critique of metaphysics) also explains the systematically ambiguous use of the category of "power." On the one hand, it retains the innocence of a concept used descriptively and serves the *empirical analysis* of power technologies; considered from a methodological perspective, this analysis is not obviously different from a historically oriented sociology of knowledge that employs functionalist procedures. On the other hand, the category of power preserves from its covert historical sources the meaning of a basic concept within a *theory of constitution* as well; this is what lends the empirical analysis of technologies of power their significance as a critique of reason and secures for genealogical historiography its unmasking effect.

II

This systematic ambiguity explains but does not justify the paradoxical linking of a positivist attitude with a critical claim that is characteristic of Foucault's works during the 1970s. In *Discipline and Punish* (1975), Foucault treats (preponderantly in connection with French materials) the technologies of domination that arose in the classical age (more or less in the age of absolutism) and in modernity (that is, since the end of the eighteenth century). The corresponding forms of inflicting punishment serve as guidelines for an investigation centered upon "the birth of the prison." The complex of power that, in the classical age, was concentrated around the sovereignty of a state with a monopoly on violence, is sedimented in the legal language games proper to modern natural law, which operate with the basic concepts of contract and law. The actual task of the absolutist

theory of the state is not so much to legitimize human rights as to ground the concentration of all violence in the hands of the sovereign. For him, it is a question of constructing a centralized apparatus of public administration and of gathering administratively useful organizational knowledge. It is not the citizen with his rights and duties, but the subject with his body and life that is the object of the new need for knowledge, which to begin with is content with knowledge about public finances and statistics on birth and death, illness and culpability, labor and commerce, the welfare and poverty of the population. Foucault already sees in this the beginnings of a biopolitics being built up gradually under the official umbrella of juristically conducted discourses related to the sovereignty of the state. There arises thereby another disciplinary power detached from the normative language game. To the degree that the human sciences become the medium of this power, and the panoptical form of supervision is permitted to penetrate into all the pores of the subjugated body and the objectified soul, it is condensed into a new, precisely modern, power complex.

Foucault treats the transfer of punishment from torture to imprisonment as an exemplary process in connection with which he wants to demonstrate the provenance of modern anthropocentric thought in modern technologies of domination. He conceives the excessive punishments and tortures to which criminals were subjected in the classical age as a theater for the ruthlessly staged power of an avenging sovereign, which was experienced quite ambivalently by the people. In the modern age, the demonstrative inflicting of corporal torment is replaced by a loss of freedom through imprisonment that is shielded from the outside world. Foucault interprets the panoptic prison as an apparatus that not only renders the prisoners pliable, but transforms them. The all-pervasive, normalizing influence of an omnipresent disciplinary power reaches, via training the body, into everyday behavior and produces an altered moral stance; at any rate, it is supposed to promote the motivation for regulated labor and an ordered life. These penal technologies could spread rapidly at the end of the eighteenth century because the prison was only one element in a rich ensemble of bodily disciplines that were established at the same time in factories and workhouses, in barracks, schools, hospitals, and prisons. It was the human sciences that then, in a subtle

manner, extended the normalizing effects of these bodily disciplines into the innermost sphere of scientifically objectified persons and populations who were simultaneously driven back into subjectivity.[7] *In their very form,* the human sciences are supposed to present an amalgam of knowledge and power; *the formation of power and the formation of knowledge compose an indissoluble unity.*

Such a strong thesis cannot, of course, be grounded just with functionalist arguments. Foucault only shows how disciplinary effects, similar to the effects of technologies of power, can be obtained through the application of knowledge from the human sciences in therapies and social technologies. In order to prove what he wants, he would have to demonstrate (for example, in the framework of a transcendental-pragmatic epistemology) that specific strategies of power are transposed into corresponding strategies for the objectification of ordinary language experiences, and consequently that they prejudice the meaning of the use of theoretical propositions about object domains constituted in this way.[8] Foucault never took up again his earlier ideas on the epistemological role of the clinical gaze, although they point in this direction. Otherwise he could scarcely have avoided noticing that in the 1970s objectifying approaches no longer dominated the field in the human sciences; they were competing instead with hermeneutical and critical approaches that were tailored in their forms of knowledge to possibilities of application *other* than manipulation of self and of others. In *The Order of Things,* Foucault traced the human sciences back to the constitutive force of a will to knowledge explained in terms of the history of metaphysics. The theory of power has to hide this connection, as has been shown. Henceforth, the place for a theory of constitution remains unoccupied. The "will to knowledge" comes up again in the title of the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* (1976), but in a shape fully altered by the theory of power. It has lost the transcendental meaning of a structurally generated will to knowing self-mastery and taken on the empirical visage of a special technology of power which, along with other technologies of power, makes possible the sciences of man.

This tangible positivizing of the will to truth and to knowledge becomes clear in a self-critique presented by Foucault in Berkeley in 1980. There he acknowledges that the analysis of technologies of

domination carried out in *Discipline and Punish* results in a one-sided picture: "If one wants to analyze the genealogy of the subject in Western societies, one has to take into account not only the techniques of domination but also techniques of the self. Let's say one has to take into account the interaction between those two types of techniques, the point where the technologies of domination of individuals over one another have recourse to processes by which the individual acts upon himself."[9] These technologies that encourage individuals to test themselves conscientiously and discover the truth about themselves Foucault traces, as is well known, back to the practices of confession, to the Christian examination of conscience in general. Structurally similar practices, which penetrate all realms of education in the eighteenth century, install an armory of instruments for self-observation and self-questioning, with the perception of one's own sexual stimulation and that of others at the center of attention. Finally, psychoanalysis gives the form of scientifically established therapy to these technologies of truth, which do not open up the interior of individuals, but produce interiority for the first time by means of an ever thicker web of relations to self.[10]

Foucault's genealogy of the human sciences enters on the scene in an irritating double role. On the one hand, it plays the *empirical role* of an analysis of technologies of power that are meant to explain the functional social context of the science of man. Here power relationships are of interest as conditions for the rise of scientific knowledge and as its social effects. On the other hand, the same genealogy plays the *transcendental role* of an analysis of technologies of power that are meant to explain how scientific discourse about man is possible at all. Here the interest is in power relationships as constitutive conditions for scientific knowledge. These two epistemological roles are no longer divided into two competing approaches that are merely related to the same object, the human subject in its life-expressions. Instead, genealogical historiography is supposed to be both at once — functionalist social science and at the same time historical research into constitutive conditions.

In his basic concept of power, Foucault has forced together the idealist idea of transcendental synthesis with the presuppositions of an empiricist ontology. This approach cannot lead to a way out of the philosophy of the subject, because the concept of power that is

supposed to provide a common denominator for the contrary semantic components has been taken from the repertoire of the philosophy of the subject itself. According to this philosophy, the subject can take up basically two and only two relationships toward the world of imaginable and manipulable objects: cognitive relationships regulated by the *truth* of judgments; and practical relationships regulated by the *success* of actions. Power is that by which the subject has an effect on objects in successful actions. In this connection, success in action depends upon the truth of the judgments that enter into the plan of action; via the criterion of success in action, power remains dependent on truth. Foucault abruptly reverses power's truth-dependency into the power-dependency of truth. Then foundational power no longer need be bound to the competencies of acting and judging subjects — power becomes subjectless. But no one can escape the strategic conceptual constraints of the philosophy of the subject merely by performing operations of reversal upon its basic concepts. Foucault cannot do away with all the aporias he attributes to the philosophy of the subject by means of a concept of power borrowed from the philosophy of the subject itself. So it is no wonder that the same unanswered questions come up again in a historiography (declared to be an antiscience) based on such a paradoxical basic concept. Because Foucault gives no methodological account of these incompatibilities, the reason for the one-sidedness of his empirical investigations also remains undisclosed.

With his turn toward the theory of power, Foucault expects to lead his research out of the circle in which the human sciences are hopelessly caught. Anthropocentric thought is drawn, by the dynamism of boundless self-mastery on the part of a subject become reflective, into the vortex of objectivism, that is, of the objectification of man; the genealogy of knowledge is supposed, by contrast, to rise to true objectivity of knowledge. Genealogical historiography grounded on the theory of power proposes three substitutions: In place of the hermeneutic elucidation of contexts of meaning, there is an analysis of structures that are meaningless in themselves; validity claims are of interest only as functions of power complexes; value judgments — in general, the problem of justifying criticism — are excluded in favor of value-free historical explanations. The name "antiscience" is to be understood not only by opposition to the reigning human

sciences; at the same time, it signals an ambitious attempt to overcome these pseudo-sciences. Genealogical research takes their place; without imitating false models from the natural sciences, its scientific status will someday be comparable to that of the natural sciences. I think that Paul Veyne catches the real intention of his friend when he describes Foucault as the "historian in a pure state" who desires nothing else than to say stoically just how it was: "Everything is historical . . . and all 'isms' should be evacuated. In history, there are only individual or indeed unique constellations, and each is completely explicable from its own situation."[11]

Of course, Foucault's dramatic influence and his iconoclastic reputation could hardly be explained if the cool facade of radical historicism did not simply hide the passions of aesthetic modernism. Genealogy is overtaken by a fate similar to that which Foucault had seen in the human sciences: To the extent that it retreats into the reflectionless objectivity of a nonparticipatory, ascetic description of kaleidoscopically changing practices of power, genealogical historiography emerges from its cocoon as precisely the *presentistic, relativistic, cryptonormative* illusory science that it does not want to be. Whereas, according to Foucault's diagnosis, the human sciences submit to the ironic movement of scientistic self-mastery and end up in an unsalutary objectivism (or better yet — come to an end therein), a no less ironic fate overtakes genealogical historiography; it follows the movement of a radically historicist extinction of the subject and ends up in an unholy subjectivism.

III

Foucault feels like a "fortunate positivist" because he proposes three reductions that are rich in methodological implications: From the viewpoint of the ethnological observer, the understanding of meaning by interpreters participating in discourses is reduced to the explanation of discourses; validity claims are functionalistically reduced to the effects of power; the "ought" is naturalistically reduced to the "is." I am speaking of reductions because the internal aspects of *meaning,* of *truth-validity,* and of *evaluating* do not go without remainder into the externally grasped aspects of practices of power. The moments that get filtered out and suppressed return again and assert

their proper rights — at first on the metatheoretical level. Foucault gets entangled in aporias as soon as he is supposed to explain what the genealogical historiographer himself does and how that performance is to be understood. That is to say, his putative objectivity of knowledge is itself put in question (1) by the involuntary *presentism* of a historiography that remains hermeneutically stuck in its starting situation; (2) by the unavoidable *relativism* of an analysis related to the present that can understand itself only as a context-dependent practical enterprise; (3) by the arbitrary *partisanship* of a criticism that cannot account for its normative foundations. Foucault is incorruptible enough to admit these incoherences — but he does not draw any consequences from them.

(1) Foucault wants to eliminate the hermeneutic problematic and thus the kind of self-relatedness that comes into play with an interpretative approach to the object domain. The genealogical historiographer should not proceed as does the practitioner of hermeneutics; he should not try to make comprehensible what actors are doing and thinking out of a context of tradition interwoven with the self-understanding of the actors. He should, rather, explain the horizon within which such utterances can appear to be meaningful at all in terms of *underlying* practices. So he will trace back the prohibition of gladiatorial fights in late Rome, for example, not to the humanizing influence of Christianity, but to the dissolution of one power formation by its successor.[12] Within the horizon of the new power complex in post-Constantinian Rome, it is, for example, entirely natural that the ruler no longer treat the people as a herd of sheep to be sheltered, but as a flock of children needing to be educated — and one must not carelessly leave children to bloodthirsty pleasure in spectacles. The speeches that justify establishing or dismantling gladiatorial fights are regarded only as objectifications of an unconscious, underlying practice of domination. As the source of all meaning, such practices are themselves meaningless; the historian has to approach them from outside in order to grasp them in their structure. For this, there is no need of any hermeneutic preunderstanding, but only of the concept of history as meaningless kaleidoscopic changes of shape in discourse totalities that have nothing in common apart from the single characteristic of being protuberances of power in general.

Against this self-understanding that holds fast to objectivity, the first glance in any one of Foucault's books teaches us that even the radical historicist can only explain the technologies of power and practices of domination by comparing them with one another — and by no means by taking any single one as a totality on its own. In doing so, one inevitably connects the viewpoints under which the comparison is proposed with his own hermeneutic point of departure. This can be seen in, among other things, the fact that Foucault cannot avoid dividing up historical epochs through implicit reference to the present. Whether he is dealing with the history of madness, of sexuality, or of punishment, the power formations of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and of the classical age constantly point to the very disciplinary power, the very biopolitics, that Foucault maintains is the fate of our present age. In the final section of *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* he makes this very objection to himself, but only to avoid it: "For the moment, and as far ahead as I can see, *my* discourse, far from determining the locus in which *it* speaks, is avoiding the ground on which it could find support."[13] Foucault is aware of the aporias raised by a procedure that wants to be objectivistic but must remain diagnostic of its time — but he does not provide any answer to them.

Only in the context of his interpretation of Nietzsche does Foucault yield to the familiar melody of a *professing* irrationalism. Here the self-extinction or the "sacrifice of the knowing subject" that the radical historicist has to demand of himself only for the sake of the objectivity of purely structural analysis undergoes an ironic shift of meaning into its opposite: "In appearance, or rather, according to the mask it bears, historical consciousness is neutral, devoid of passions, and committed solely to truth. But if it examines itself and if, more generally, it interrogates the various forms of scientific consciousness in its history, it finds that all these forms and transformations are aspects of the will to knowledge: instinct, passion, the inquisitor's devotion, cruel subtlety, and malice. It discovers the violence of a position that sides against those who are happy in their ignorance. . . . The historical analysis of this rancorous will to knowledge reveals that all knowledge rests upon injustice (that there is no right, even in the act of knowing, to truth or foundation for truth)."[14]

Thus, the attempt — under the uncompromising, objectifying gaze of an analyst who comes from afar and confronts his object without

any native understanding whatsoever — to explain discourse and power formations only on their own terms, turns into its opposite. The unmasking of the objectivistic illusions of *any* will to knowledge leads to agreement with a historiography that is narcissistically oriented toward the standpoint of the historian and instrumentalizes the contemplation of the past for the needs of the present: The "'wirkliche Historie' composes a genealogy of history as the vertical projection of its position."[15]

(2) Foucault's historiography can evade relativism as little as it can this acute presentism. His investigations are caught exactly in the self-referentiality that was supposed to be excluded by a naturalistic treatment of the problematic of validity. Genealogical historiography is supposed to make the practices of power, precisely in their discourse-constituting achievement, accessible to an empirical analysis. From this perspective, not only are truth claims confined to the discourses within which they arise; they exhaust their entire significance in the functional contribution they make to the self-maintenance of a given totality of discourse. That is to say, the meaning of validity claims consists in the power effects they have. On the other hand, this basic assumption of the theory of power is self-referential; if it is correct, it must destroy the foundations of the research inspired by it as well. But if the truth claims that Foucault himself raises for his genealogy of knowledge were in fact illusory and amounted to no more than the effects that this theory is capable of releasing within the circle of its adherents, then the entire undertaking of a critical unmasking of the human sciences would lose its point. Foucault pursues genealogical historiography with the serious intent of getting a science underway that is superior to the mismanaged human sciences. If, then, its superiority cannot be expressed in the fact that something more convincing enters in place of the convicted pseudo-sciences, if its superiority were only to be expressed in the effect of its suppressing the hitherto dominant scientific discourse *in fact*, Foucault's theory would exhaust itself in the politics of theory, and indeed in setting theoretical-political goals that would overburden the capacities of even so heroic a one-man enterprise. Foucault is aware of this. Consequently, he would like to single out his genealogy from all the rest of the human sciences in a manner that is reconcilable with the fundamental assumptions of his own theory. To this

end, he turns genealogical historiography upon itself; the difference that can establish its preeminence above all the other human sciences is to be demonstrated in the history of its own emergence.

The genealogy of knowledge makes use of those disqualified modes of knowledge from which the established sciences set themselves apart; it provides a medium for the uprising of "subjugated knowledges." Foucault is not thinking here primarily of sedimentations of scholarship that are at once concealed and held present; he is thinking, rather, of those experiences of groups subordinated to power that have never advanced to the status of official knowledge, that have never been sufficiently articulated. It is a question of the implicit knowledge of "the people" who form the bedrock in a system of power, who are the first to experience a technology of power with their own bodies, whether as the ones suffering or as the officials manning the machinery of suffering — for example, the knowledge of those who undergo psychiatric treatment, of orderlies, of delinquents and wardens, of the inmates of concentration camps and the guards, of blacks and homosexuals, of women and of witches, of vagabonds, of children and dreamers. The genealogist directs his prospecting toward the dark ground proper to that local, marginal, and alternative knowledge "which owes its force only to the harshness with which it is opposed by everything surrounding it." These elements of knowledge are normally "disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity."[16] There slumbers in them "a historical knowledge of struggles." Genealogy, which raises these "local memories" up to the level of "erudite knowledge," takes the side of those who resist established practices of power. From this position of counterpower, it gains a perspective that is supposed to go beyond the perspectives of the given possessors of power. From this perspective, it is supposed to be able to transcend all validity claims that are only constituted in the enchanted circle of power. This link with disqualified popular knowledge is supposed to give to the genealogist's labor of reconstruction its superiority: "Well, it seems to me that our critical discourses of the last fifteen years have in effect discovered their essential force in this association . . . [with] those disqualified [knowledges]."[17]

This is reminiscent of an argument of the early Lukács. According to him, Marxist theory owed its freedom from ideological bias to the privileged possibilities of knowledge from a perspective of experience that had arisen with the position of the wage-laborer in the process of production. The argument was only cogent, however, within the framework of a philosophy of history that wanted to make the universal interest discernible in the class interest of the proletariat, and the self-consciousness of the species discoverable in the class consciousness of the proletariat. Foucault's concept of power does not permit such a concept of counterpower that grants cognitive privilege on the basis of a philosophy of history. Every counterpower already moves within the horizon of the power that it fights; and it is transformed, as soon as it is victorious, into a power complex that provokes a new counterpower. Even the genealogy of knowledge cannot break out of this cycle while it activates the uprising of the disqualified modes of knowledge and mobilizes this subjected knowledge "against the coercion of a theoretical, unitary, formal, and scientific discourse."[18] Those who conquer the theoretical avant-garde of today and overcome the current hierarchization of knowledge, themselves become the theoretical avant-garde of tomorrow and themselves establish a new hierarchy of knowledge. In any case, they cannot validate for their knowledge any superiority according to standards of truth claims that would transcend local agreements.

Thus, the attempt to preserve genealogical historiography from a relativist self-denial by means of its own tools falls short. In becoming aware of its own provenance from this alliance of scholarly and disqualified knowledge, genealogy only confirms that the validity claims of counterdiscourses count no more and no less than those of the discourses in power — they, too, *are* nothing else than the effects of power they unleash. Foucault sees this dilemma, but once again he evades any response. And once again he professes his allegiance to an embattled perspectivism only in the context of his reception of Nietzsche: "Historians take unusual pains to erase the elements in their work which reveal their grounding in a particular time and place, their preferences in a controversy — the unavoidable obstacles of their passion. Nietzsche's version of historical sense is explicit in its perspective and acknowledges its system of injustice. Its perspective is slanted, being a deliberate appraisal, affirmation, or negation;

it reaches the lingering and poisonous traces in order to prescribe the best antidote."[19]

(3) It remains, finally, to examine whether Foucault succeeds in escaping the cryptonormativism of which the human sciences that preen themselves for their value-freeness are guilty in his own view. Genealogical historiography is supposed to reach behind discourse totalities (within which alone disputes over norms and values occur) with a strictly descriptive attitude. It brackets normative validity claims as well as claims to propositional truth and abstains from the question of whether some discourse and power formations could be more legitimate than others. Foucault resists the demand to take sides; he scoffs at the "gauchist dogma" which contends that power is what is evil, ugly, sterile, and dead and that that upon which power is exercised is "right, good, and rich."[20] For him, there is no "right side." Behind this is the conviction that the politics that has stood under the sign of revolution since 1789 has come to an end; that the theories that have thought out the relationship between theory and practice are passé.

Now *this* grounding of a second-order value-freeness is already by no means value-free. Foucault understands himself as a dissident who offers resistance to modern thought and humanistically disguised disciplinary power. Engagement marks his learned essays right down to the style and choice of words; the critical tenor dominates the theory no less than the self-definition of the entire work. Foucault thereby distinguishes himself, on the one hand, from the engaged positivism of a Max Weber, who wanted to separate a decisionistically chosen and openly declared value basis from an analysis carried out in a value-free way. Foucault's criticism is based more on the postmodern rhetoric of his presentation than on the postmodern assumptions of his theory.

On the other hand, Foucault also distinguishes himself from the ideology critique of a Marx, who unmasked the humanistic self-understanding of modernity by suing for the normative content of bourgeois ideals. It is not Foucault's intention to continue that counterdiscourse which modernity has carried on with itself from its very beginnings; he does not want to refine the language game of modern political theory (with its basic concepts of autonomy and heteronomy, morality and legality, emancipation and repression) and turn

it against the pathologies of modernity — he wants to undermine modernity and its language games. His resistance is not to be justified as a mirror image of the current power: "If that were all," responds Foucault to a corresponding question from Bernard-Henri Levy, "there wouldn't be any resistance. Because resistance has to be like power: just as inventive, just as mobile, just as productive as it is. It has to be organized and stabilized like it is; like it, it has to come from below and be strategically shared."[21]

This dissidence draws its only justification from the fact that it sets traps for humanistic discourse without engaging in it; Foucault explains this strategic self-understanding from the properties of modern formations of power themselves. That disciplinary power whose local, constant, productive, and all-pervasive, capillarylike character he describes so repeatedly invades the bodies rather than the heads. It assumes the shape of a biopower that takes possession more of bodies than of minds and subjects these bodies to relentlessly normalizing constraint — without needing any normative foundation to do so. Disciplinary power functions without the detour through a necessarily false consciousness shaped within humanistic discourses and hence exposed to the criticism of counterdiscourses. The discourses of the human sciences merge with the practices of their application into an opaque power complex on which the critique of ideology makes no impression. Humanistic critique — which, like those of Marx and Freud, is based on obsolete contradictions between legitimate and illegitimate power, conscious and unconscious motives, and enters the field against the representatives of repression, exploitation, suppression, and so forth — is in danger, rather, of merely strengthening a humanism that has been brought down from heaven to earth and has become a normalizing form of violence.

Now this argument may suffice for conceiving genealogical historiography no longer as critique, but as a tactic and a tool for waging a battle against a normatively unassailable formation of power. But if it is just a matter of mobilizing counterpower, of strategic battles and wily confrontations, why should we muster any resistance at all against this all-pervasive power circulating in the bloodstream of the body of modern society, instead of just adapting ourselves to it? Then the genealogy of knowledge as a weapon would be superfluous as well. It makes sense that a value-free analysis of the strengths and weak-

nesses of the opponent is of use to one who wants to take up the fight — but why fight at all? "Why is struggle preferable to submission? Why ought domination to be resisted? Only with the introduction of normative notions of some kind could Foucault begin to answer this question. Only with the introduction of normative notions could he begin to tell us what is wrong with the modern power/knowledge regime and why we ought to oppose it."[22] Once, in a lecture, Foucault addressed this question in passing and gave a vague suggestion of postmodern criteria of justification: "If one wants . . . to struggle against disciplines and disciplinary power, it is not toward the ancient right of sovereignty that one should turn, but toward the possibility of a new form of right, one which must indeed be antidisciplinarian, but at the same time liberated from the principle of sovereignty."[23]

Now it is a fact that in the wake of Kant, conceptions of morality and right have been developed which have long since ceased to serve the role of justifying the sovereignty of a state with a monopoly on violence; but Foucault remains silent on this theme. However, if one tries to glean the standards implicitly appealed to in his indictments of disciplinary power, one encounters familiar determinations from the normativistic language games that he has explicitly rejected. The asymmetric relationship between powerholders and those subject to power, as well as the reifying effects of technologies of power, which violate the moral and bodily integrity of subjects capable of speech and action, are objectionable for Foucault, too. Nancy Fraser has proposed an interpretation that, while it does not point a way out of this dilemma, does explain whence the cryptonormativism of this declaredly value-free historiography arises.[24]

Nietzsche's concept of the will to power and Bataille's concept of sovereignty more or less openly take in the normative experiential content of aesthetic modernity. By contrast, Foucault borrows his concept of power from the empiricist tradition; this has robbed it of the experiential potential of an at once terrifying and attractive fascination, from which the aesthetic avant-garde from Baudelaire to the surrealists was nourished. Nevertheless, even in Foucault's hands, "power" preserves a literally aesthetic relation to the perception of the body, to the painful experience of the mistreated body. This moment even becomes determinative for the modern power forma-

tion, which owes the name of biopower to the fact that it penetrates deeply into the reified body and confiscates the whole organism along the subtle paths of scientific objectification and a subjectivity generated by technologies of truth. Biopower is the name for the form of sociation that does away with all forms of natural spontaneity and transforms the creaturely life as a whole into a substrate of empowerment. The asymmetry (replete with normative content) that Foucault sees embedded in power complexes does not hold primarily between powerful wills and coerced subjugation, but between processes of power and the bodies that are crushed within them. It is always the body that is maltreated in torture and made into a showpiece of sovereign revenge; that is taken hold of in drill, resolved into a field of mechanical forces and manipulated; that is objectified and monitored by the human sciences, even as it is stimulated in its desire and stripped naked. If Foucault's concept of power preserves for itself some remnant of aesthetic content, then it owes this to his vitalistic, *Lebensphilosophie* way of reading the body's experience of itself. *The History of Sexuality* closes with the unusual statement: "We have to dream that perhaps one day, in another economy of bodies and pleasures, it will no longer be rightly comprehensible how . . . it could have succeeded in subjecting us to the absolute sovereignty of sex."[25] This *other* economy of the body and of pleasures, about which in the meantime — with Bataille — we can only dream, would not be another economy of power, but a postmodern theory that would also give an account of the standards of critique already laid claim to implicitly. Until then, resistance can draw its motivation, if not its justification, only from the signals of body language, from that nonverbalizable language of the body on which pain has been inflicted, which refuses to be sublated into discourse.[26]

Foucault cannot, of course, make this interpretation his own, though it surely finds a basis in some of his more revealing gestures. Otherwise, like Bataille, he would have to confer upon the other of reason the status that he has denied it, with good reason, ever since *Madness and Civilization.* He is defending himself against a naturalistic metaphysics that adulates the counterpower of prediscursive referents: "What you call 'naturalism,' " he says in a reply to Bernard-Henri Levy in 1977, "signifies the idea that underneath power, with its acts of violence and its artifices, we should be able to rediscover the things

themselves in their primordial vitality: behind asylum walls, the spontaneity of madness; in and through the penal system, the fertile unrest of delinquency; beneath sexual prohibitions, the purity of desire."[27] Because Foucault cannot accept this notion from *Lebensphilosophie,* he has likewise to refrain from responding to the question about the normative foundations of his critique.

IV

Foucault cannot adequately deal with the persistent problems that come up in connection with an interpretative approach to the object domain, a self-referential denial of universal validity claims, and a normative justification for critique. The categories of meaning, validity, and value are to be eliminated not only on the metatheoretical, but on the empirical level as well. Genealogical historiography deals with an object domain from which the theory of power has erased all traces of communicative actions entangled in lifeworld contexts. This suppression of basic concepts that could take into account the symbolic prestructuring of action systems burdens his empirical research with problems that, this time at least, Foucault does not address. I will pick out two problems with a venerable history in classical social theory: the issues of how social order is possible at all, and of how individual and society are related to one another.

When, like Foucault, one admits only the model of processes of subjugation, of confrontations mediated by the body, of contexts of more or less consciously strategic action; when one excludes any stabilizing of domains of action in terms of values, norms, and processes of mutual understanding and offers for these mechanisms of social integration none of the familiar equivalents from systems or exchange theories; then one is hardly able to explain just how persistent local struggles could get consolidated into institutionalized power. Axel Honneth has energetically worked out this problematic. Foucault presupposes in his descriptions institutionally sedimented disciplines, power practices, technologies of truth and of domination, but he cannot explain "how there can be derived from a social condition of uninterrupted struggle the aggregate state of a network of power, however momentary one conceives it as being."[28] Conceptual difficulties similar to those raised by the epochal establishment of

discourse and power formations are posed by the phenomena for which Durkheim introduced the key term "institutionalized individualism."

If one admits only the model of empowerment, the socialization of succeeding generations can also be presented only in the image of wily confrontation. Then, however, the socialization of subjects capable of speech and action cannot be simultaneously conceived as individuation, but only as the progressive subsumption of bodies and of all vital substrata under technologies of power. The increasingly individualizing formative processes that penetrate ever broader social strata in societies with traditions that have become reflective and with action norms that are highly abstract, have to be artificially reinterpreted to make up for the categorical poverty of the empowerment model. Foucault, the theorist of power, encounters here the same problems as the institutionalist, Arnold Gehlen;[29] both theories lack a mechanism for social integration such as language, with its interlacing of the performative attitudes of speakers and hearers,[30] which could explain the individuating effects of socialization. Just like Gehlen, Foucault compensates for this bottleneck in his basic concepts by purifying the concept of individuation of all connotations of self-determination and self-realization, and reducing it to an *inner world* produced by external stimuli and fitted out with arbitrarily manipulable, representative contents.

This time the difficulty does not result from the lack of an equivalent for familiar constructions of the relationship between individual and society; rather, the issue is whether the model of an inflation of the psychic that is evoked by power techniques (or released by the disintegration of institutions) does not make it necessary to bring the growth in subjective freedom under descriptions that render unrecognizable the experience of an expanded scope for expressive self-manifestation and for autonomy.

Foucault could, of course, turn back objections of this kind as *petitio principii*. Do they not rest on traditional problematics that for Foucault have long since become objectless — together with the human sciences from whose horizon they come? We could only answer this question in the negative if what looks to us like a basic conceptual deficiency were also to affect the design and execution of empirical investigations and thus could be pinned down to specific readings

and blind spots. I want at least to suggest a few perspectives from which an empirical critique of Foucault's history of the emergence of modern punishment and of sexuality might be carried out.

Discipline and Punish is set up as a genealogy of scientifically rationalized penal law and of scientifically humanized penal practice. Those technologies of domination in which disciplinary power is expressed today form the *common* matrix for humanizing punishment *and* for obtaining knowledge about human beings.[31] The rationalization of penal law and the humanization of penal practice were set in motion at the close of the eighteenth century under the rhetorical umbrella of a reform movement that justified itself normatively in concepts of law and morality. Foucault wants to show that beneath this was concealed a brutal change in the practices of power — the rise of the modern regime of power, "an adaptation and a refinement of the machinery that assumes responsibility for and places under surveillance their everyday behavior, their identity, their activity, their apparently unimportant gestures."[32] Foucault can illustrate this thesis with impressive cases; nevertheless, the thesis is false in its generality. It contends that the panopticism found in modern punishment is characteristic for the structure of societal modernization as a whole. Foucault can only propose this thesis in its generalized form because he is working with basic concepts of the theory of power for which the normative structures of the development of law remain elusive: Moral-practical learning processes have to present themselves to him as intensifications of processes of empowerment. This reduction is enacted in several steps.

Foucault *begins* by analyzing the normative language game of rational natural law in connection with the latent functions that the discourse on authority has in the age of classicism for the establishment and the exercise of absolutist state power. The sovereignty of the state that has a monopoly on violence is also expressed in the demonstrative forms of punishment that Foucault depicts in connection with the procedures of torture and ordeal. From the same functionalist perspective, he *then* describes the advances made by the classical language game during the reform era of the Enlightenment. They culminate, on the one hand, in the Kantian theory of morality and law and, on the other hand, in utilitarianism. Interestingly enough, Foucault does not go into the fact that these in turn serve

the revolutionary establishment of a constitutionalized state power, which is to say, of a political order transferred ideologically from the sovereignty of the prince to the sovereignty of the people. This kind of regime is, after all, correlated with those normalizing forms of punishment that constitute the proper theme of *Discipline and Punish.*

Because Foucault filters out the internal aspects of the development of law, he can inconspicuously take a *third* and decisive step: Whereas the sovereign power of classical formations of power is constituted in concepts of right and law, this normative language game is supposed to be inapplicable to the disciplinary power of the modern age; the latter is suited only to empirical, at least nonjuridical, concepts having to do with the factual steering and organization of the behavioral modes and the motives of a population rendered increasingly manipulable by science: "The procedures of normalization come to be ever more constantly engaged in the colonization of those of the law. I believe that all this can explain the global functioning of what I would call a society of normalization."[33] As the transition from doctrines of natural law to those of natural societies shows,[34] the complex life-context of modern societies as a whole can as a matter of fact be less and less construed in the natural-law categories of contractual relationships. However, this circumstance cannot justify the strategic decision (so full of consequences for Foucault's theory) to neglect the development of normative structures in connection with the modern formation of power. As soon as Foucault takes up the threads of the biopolitical establishment of disciplinary power, he lets drop the threads of the legal organization of the exercise of power and of the legitimation of the order of domination. Because of this, the ungrounded impression arises that the bourgeois constitutional state is a dysfunctional relic from the period of absolutism.

This uncircumspect leveling of culture and politics to immediate substrates of the application of violence explains the ostensible gaps in his presentation. That his history of modern penal justice is detached from the development of the constitutional state might be defended on methodological grounds. The theoretical narrowing down to the system of *carrying out* punishment is more questionable. As soon as he passes from the classical to the modern age, Foucault pays no attention whatsoever to penal *law* and to the *law* governing

penal process. Otherwise, he would have had to submit the unmistakable gains in liberality and legal security, and the expansion of civil-rights guarantees even in this area, to an exact interpretation in terms of the theory of power. However, his presentation is utterly distorted by the fact that he also filters out of the history of penal practices itself all aspects of legal regulation. In prisons, indeed, just as in clinics, schools, and military installations, there do exist those "special power relationships" that have by no means remained undisturbed by an energetically advancing enactment of legal rights — Foucault himself has been politically engaged for this cause.

This selectivity does not take anything away from the importance of his fascinating unmasking of the capillary effects of power. But his generalization, in terms of the theory of power, of such a selective reading hinders Foucault from perceiving the phenomenon actually in need of explanation: In the welfare-state democracies of the West, the spread of legal regulation has the structure of a dilemma, because it is the legal means for securing freedom that themselves endanger the freedom of their presumptive beneficiaries. Under the premises of his theory of power, Foucault so levels down the complexity of social modernization that the disturbing paradoxes of this process cannot even become apparent to him.

The same tendency toward a leveling of ambiguous phenomena can be seen in Foucault's history of modern sexuality. This deals with the central area of internal nature becoming reflective, that is, of subjectivity in the early Romantic sense of an interiority capable of expressing itself. What is leveled down here is the problematic structure of a long-term process of individuation and interiorization (accompanied by techniques of disclosure and strategies of surveillance) that simultaneously creates new zones of alienation and normalization. Herbert Marcuse interpreted the contemporary phenomena of a sexual liberation that is controlled, socially regulated, and at the same time commercialized and administered, as "repressive desublimation." This analysis holds open the perspective of a liberating desublimation. Foucault starts from the quite similar phenomenon of a sexuality that has been disqualified, reduced to a medium of control, and stripped of all eroticism — but he sees in it the telos, the revealed secret of sexual liberation. Behind the illusory emancipation there is entrenched a power that develops its productivity

through an insidiously induced compulsion to confession and voyeurism. For Foucault, "sexuality" is equivalent to a discourse and power formation that validates the innocent demand for truthfulness in regard to one's own stimulations, instinctive desires, and experiences, to which one has privileged access; and this discourse and power formation effects an inconspicuous stimulation of bodies, an intensification of pleasures, and a shaping of spiritual energies. Since the end of the eighteenth century, a net of truth techniques has been drawn about the masturbating child, the hysterical woman, the perverse adult, the procreating couple — all the places surrounded by leering pedagogues, doctors, psychologists, judges, family planners, and so forth.

One could show in detail how Foucault simplifies the highly complex process of a progressive problematization of internal nature into a linear history. In our context, however, what is primarily of interest is the peculiar filtering out of all the aspects under which the eroticization and internalization of subjective nature also meant a gain in freedom and expressive possibilities. C. Honegger warns against projecting present-day phenomena of repressive desublimation back into past history and suppressing once again the repressions of the past: "In the not too distant past there were commands of chastity for women, a production of female fridigity, a double standard for men, the stigmatizing of deviant sexual behavior, as well as all the kinds of degradation of love life about which Freud heard in his treatment room."[35] Foucault's objections against the Freudian model of the repression of drives, and emancipation through heightened awareness, have a surface plausibility; but this is due to the fact that freedom, as the principle of modernity, cannot be really grasped by means of the basic concepts of the philosophy of the subject.

In all attempts to grasp self-determination and self-realization, that is, freedom in the moral and the aesthetic senses, with the tools of the philosophy of the subject, one immediately runs up against an ironic inversion of what is actually intended. Repression of the self is the converse side of an autonomy that is pressed into subject-object relationships; the loss — and the narcissistic fear of loss — of self is the converse of an expressivity brought under these concepts. That the moral subject has to make an object of itself, that the expressive subject must surrender itself as such or, from fear of externalizing

itself in objects, close in upon itself, does not correspond to the intuition of freedom and liberation; rather, it brings to light the constraints upon thought proper to the philosophy of the subject. Along with subject and object, however, Foucault also throws overboard that intuition that was to have been conceptualized in terms of "subjectivity." To be sure, as long as we only take into account subjects representing and dealing with objects, and subjects who externalize themselves in objects or can relate to themselves as objects, it is not possible to conceive of socialization as individuation and to write the history of modern sexuality *also* from the point of view that the internalization of subjective nature makes individuation possible. But along with the philosophy of the subject, Foucault also gets rid of the problems with respect to which that philosophy broke down. In place of socialization as individuating (which remains unconceptualized), he puts the concept of a fragmenting empowerment, a concept that is not up to the ambiguous phenomena of modernity. From his perspective, socialized individuals can only be perceived as exemplars, as standardized products of some discourse formation — as individual copies that are mechanically punched out. Gehlen, who thought from opposite political motives, but also from a similar theoretical perspective, made no secret of this: "A personality: that is an institution in a *single* instance."[36]

Notes

1. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York, 1973), pp. 342–343.

2. Ibid., p. 322.

3. M. Frank directs our attention to this preference for the model of representation, which cannot be systematically justified by Foucault, in *Was Heisst Neostrukturalismus?* (Frankfurt, 1984), lectures 9 and 10.

4. Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago, 1983), p. 84. See also Axel Honneth, *Kritik der Macht* (Frankfurt, 1985), pp. 133ff.

5. Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* (New York, 1980), p. 132.

6. Ibid., p. 131.

7. "These sciences, which have so delighted our 'humanity' for over a century, have their technical matrix in the petty malicious minutiae of the disciplines and their investigations. These investigations are perhaps to psychology, psychiatry, pedagogy, criminology, and so many other strange sciences, what the terrible power of investigation was to the calm knowledge of the animals, the plants or the earth. Another power, another knowledge. On the threshold of the classical age, Bacon, lawyer and statesman, tried to develop a methodology of investigation for the empirical sciences. What Great Observer will produce the methodology of examination for the human sciences? Unless, of course, such a thing is not possible. For, although it is true that, in becoming a technique for the empirical sciences, the investigation has detached itself from the inquisitorial procedure in which it was historically rooted, the examination has remained extremely close to the disciplinary power that shaped it. It has always been and still is an intrinsic element of the disciplines. Of course, it seems to have undergone a speculative purification by integrating itself with such sciences as psychology and psychiatry. And, in effect, its appearance in the form of tests, interviews, interrogations and consultations is apparently in order to rectify the mechanisms of discipline: educational psychology is supposed to correct the rigors of the school, just as the medical or psychiatric interview is supposed to rectify the effects of the discipline of work. But we must not be misled; these techniques merely refer individuals from one disciplinary authority to another, and they reproduce, in a concentrated or formalized form, the schema of power-knowledge proper to each discipline. . . . The great investigation that gave rise to the sciences of nature has become detached from its politico-juridical model; the examination, on the other hand, is still caught up in disciplinary technology." (Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* [New York, 1977], pp. 226–227.)

This passage is interesting in two respects. First, the comparison between the natural and the human sciences is meant to instruct us that both have emerged from technologies of power, but that only the natural sciences have been able to detach themselves from the context of their emergence and develop into serious discourses that actually redeem their claims to objectivity and truth. Second, Foucault is of the opinion that the human sciences could not be dissociated from the context of their emergence at all, because in their case the practices of power are not only causally involved in the history of their rise, but play a transcendental role in the constitution of their knowledge.

8. See Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Boston and London, 1971); more recently, Karl-Otto Apel, *Understanding and Explanation* (Cambridge, MA, 1984).

9. Michel Foucault, "Howison Lecture on Truth and Subjectivity," October 20, 1980, University of California at Berkeley, unpublished manuscript, p. 7.

10. In *The History of Sexuality,* Foucault investigates the contexts of genesis and of application to which psychoanalysis is fitted. Once again, functionalist modes

of argumentation are supposed to establish what they cannot establish — namely, that technologies of power constitute the domain of scientific objects and hence also prejudice the criteria of validity for what is considered true or false within scientific discourse.

11. Paul Veyne, *Der Eisberg der Geschichte* (Berlin, 1981), p. 52.

12. Veyne also deals with this example (ibid., pp. 6ff.).

13. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* (New York, 1972), p. 205.

14. Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews* (Ithaca, 1977), pp. 162–163.

15. Ibid., p. 157.

16. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, p. 82.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid., p. 85.

19. Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," pp. 156–157.

20. B.-H. Levy, "Power and Sex: An Interview with Michel Foucault," *Telos* 32(1977):152–161, here p. 158.

21. "Non au sexe roi," *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 12 March 1977. [The passage quoted does not appear in the English translation of this interview cited in note 20.]

22. Nancy Fraser, "Foucault on Modern Power: Empirical Insights and Normative Confusions," *Praxis International* 1(1981):283.

23. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, p. 108.

24. In an article entitled "Foucault's Body-Language: A Posthumanistic Political Rhetoric?" *Salmagundi* 61(1983):55–70.

25. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, volume 1: *In Introduction* (New York, 1978).

26. P. Sloterdijk works out this alternative in relation to the instance of the mute, bodily-expressive forms of protest of the cynic: *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft*, 2 volumes (Frankfurt, 1982). See Jürgen Habermas, "Ein Renegat der Subjektphilosophie," *Pflasterband* 159 (1983). Foucault's own investigations went in a different direction; see his afterword to the second edition of Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*, pp. 229ff.

27. Levy, "Power and Sex," p. 158.

28. Honneth, *Kritik der Macht,* p. 182.

29. Arnold Gehlen, *Die Seele im technischen Zeitalter* (Hamburg, 1957).

30. Jürgen Habermas, *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns,* volume 2 (Frankfurt, 1981), pp. 92ff.

31. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish,* p. 23.

32. Ibid., p. 77.

33. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge,* p. 107.

34. Jürgen Habermas, "Natural Law and Revolution," in *Theory and Practice* (Boston and London, 1973), pp. 82–120.

35. C. Honegger, *Überlegungen zu Michel Foucaults Entwurf einer Geschichte der Sexualität,* unpublished manuscript, 1982, p. 10.

36. Gehlen, *Die Seele,* p. 118.

36. Gehlen, *Die Seele,* p. 118.

5

Critical Theory/Intellectual History

Michel Foucault

Gérard Raulet: How should we begin? I have had two questions in mind. First, what is the origin of this global term, "poststructuralism"?

Foucault: First, none of the protagonists in the structuralist movement — and none of those who, willingly or otherwise, were dubbed structuralists — knew very clearly what it was all about. Certainly, those who were applying structural methods in very precise disciplines such as linguistics and comparative mythology knew what was structuralism, but as soon as one strayed from these very precise disciplines, nobody knew exactly what it was. I am not sure how interesting it would be to attempt a redefinition of what was known, at the time, as structuralism. It would be interesting, though, to study formal thought and the different kinds of formalism that ran through Western culture during the twentieth century. When we consider the extraordinary destiny of formalism in painting or formal research in music, or the importance of formalism in the analysis of folklore and legend, in architecture, or its application to theoretical thought, it is clear that formalism in general has probably been one of the strongest and at the same time one of the most varied currents in twentieth-century Europe. And it is worth pointing out that formalism has very often been associated with political situations and even political movements. It would certainly be worth examining more closely the relation of Russian formalism to the Russian Revolution. The role of formalist art and formalist thought at the beginning of the twentieth century, their ideological value, their links with differ-

ent political movements — all of this would be very interesting. I am struck by how far the structuralist movement in France and Western Europe during the sixties echoed the efforts of certain Eastern countries — notably Czechoslovakia — to free themselves of dogmatic Marxism, and towards the mid-fifties and early sixties, while countries like Czechoslovakia were seeing a renaissance of the old tradition of prewar European formalism, we also witnessed the birth in Western Europe of what was known as structuralism — which is to say, I suppose, a new modality of this formalist thought and investigation. That is how I would situate the structuralist phenomenon: by relocating it within the broad current of formal thought.

G. R.: In Western Europe, Germany was particularly inclined to conceive the student movement, which began earlier there than it did in France (from '64 or '65, there was definite agitation in the universities), in terms of Critical Theory.

Foucault: Yes.

G. R.: Clearly, there is no necessary relation between Critical Theory and the student movement. If anything, the student movement instrumentalized Critical Theory, or made use of it. In the same way, there is no direct connection either between structuralism and '68.

Foucault: That is correct.

G. R.: But were you not saying, in a way, that structuralism was a necessary preamble?

Foucault: No. There is nothing necessary in this order of ideas. But to put it very, very crudely, formalist culture, thought and art in the first third of the twentieth century were generally associated with Left political movements — or critiques — and even with certain revolutionary instances; and Marxism concealed all that. It was fiercely critical of formalism in art and theory, most clearly from the '30s onwards. Thirty years later, you saw people in certain Eastern bloc countries and even in France beginning to unsettle Marxist dogmatism with types of analysis obviously inspired by formalism. What happened in France in 1968, and in other countries as well, is at once extremely interesting and highly ambiguous — and interesting because of its ambiguity. It is a case of movements which, very often, have endowed themselves with a strong reference to Marxism and

which, at the same time, have insisted on a violent critique vis-à-vis the dogmatic Marxism of parties and institutions. Indeed, the range of interplay between a certain kind of non-Marxist thinking and these Marxist references was the space in which the student movements developed — movements that sometimes carried revolutionary Marxist discourse to the height of exaggeration, but which were often inspired at the same time by an antidogmatic violence that ran counter to this type of discourse.

G. R.: An antidogmatic violence in search of references . . .

Foucault: And looking for them, on occasion, in an exasperated dogmatism.

G. R.: Via Freud or via structuralism.

Foucault: Correct. So, once again, I would like to reassess the history of formalism and relocate this minor structuralist episode in France — relatively short, with diffuse forms — within the larger phenomenon of formalism in twentieth century, as important in its way as Romanticism or even positivism was during the nineteenth century.

G. R.: We will return later to positivism. For now, I want to follow the thread of this French evolution which you are almost retracing: a thread of references (both very dogmatic and inspired by a will to antidogmatism) to Marx, Freud and structuralism, in the hope of discovering in people like Lacan a figure who would put an end to syncretism and would manage to unify all these strands. This approach, moreover, drew a magisterial response from Lacan to the students at Vincennes, running roughly as follows: "You want to combine Marx and Freud. Psychoanalysis can teach you that you are looking for a master; and you will have this master"[1] — an extremely violent kind of disengagement from this attempt at a combination. I read in Vincent Descombes' book, *Le Même et l'autre,* with which you are no doubt familiar . . .[2]

Foucault: No, I know it exists but I have not read it.

G. R.: . . .that fundamentally, it was necessary to wait until 1972 in order to emerge from this vain effort to combine Marxism and Freudianism; and that its emergence was achieved by Deleuze and Guattari, who came from the Lacanian school. Somewhere, I took the liberty of writing that we had certainly emerged from this fruitless attempt

at a combination, but in a way that Hegel would have criticized. In other words, we went in pursuit of the third man — Nietzsche — to bring him into the site of the impossible synthesis, referring to him rather than to the impossible combination of Marx and Freud. In any case, according to Descombes, it seems that this tendency to resort to Nietzsche began in 1972. What do you think?

Foucault: No, I do not think that is quite right. First, you know how I am. I am always a bit suspicious of these forms of synthesis which present French thought as Freudian-Marxist at one stage and then as having discovered Nietzsche at another. Since 1945, for a whole range of political and cultural reasons, Marxism in France was a kind of horizon which Sartre thought for a time was impossible to surpass. At that time, it was definitely a very closed horizon, and a very imposing one. Also, we should not forget that throughout the period from 1945 to 1955 in France, the entire French university — the young French university, as opposed to what had been the traditional university — was very much preoccupied with the task of building something which was not Freudian-Marxist but Husserlian-Marxist: the phenomenology-Marxism relation. That is what was at stake in the debates and efforts of a whole series of people. Merleau-Ponty and Sartre, in moving from phenomenology to Marxism, were definitely operating on that axis. Desanti too . . .

G. R.: Dufrenne, even Lyotard.

Foucault: And Ricoeur, who was certainly not a Marxist, but a phenomenologist in no way oblivious to Marxism . . . So, at first they tried to wed Marxism and phenomenology; and it was later, once a certain kind of structural thinking — structural method — had begun to develop, that we saw structuralism replace phenomenology and become coupled with Marxism and essentially it concerned the problem of language. That, I think was a fairly critical point: Merleau-Ponty's encounter with language. And, as you know, Merleau-Ponty's later efforts addressed that question. I remember clearly some lectures in which Merleau-Ponty began speaking of Saussure who, even if he had been dead for fifty years, was quite unknown, not so much to French linguists and philologists, but to the cultured public. So the problem of language appeared and it was clear that phenomenology was no match for structural analysis in accounting for the effects of meaning

that could be produced by a structure of the linguistic type, in which the subject (in the phenomenological sense) did not intervene to confer meaning. And quite naturally, with the phenomenological spouse finding herself disqualified by her inability to address language, structuralism became the new bride. That is how I would look at it. Even so, psychoanalysis — in large part under the influence of Lacan — also raised a problem which, though very different, was not analogous. For the unconscious could not feature in any discussion of a phenomenological kind; of which the most conclusive proof, as the French saw it anyhow, was the fact that Sartre and Merleau-Ponty — I am not talking about the others — were always trying to break down what they saw as positivism, or mechanism, or Freudian "*chosisme*" in order to affirm a constituting subject. And when Lacan, around the time that questions of language were beginning to be posed, remarked, "Whatever you do, the unconscious as such can never be reduced to the effects of a conferral of meaning to which the phenomenological subject is susceptible," he was posing a problem absolutely symmetrical with that of the linguists. Once again, the phenomenological subject was disqualified by psychoanalysis, as it had been by linguistic theory. And it is quite understandable at that point that Lacan could say the unconscious was structured like a language. For one and all, it was the same type of problem. So we had a Freudian-structuralist-Marxism: and with phenomenology disqualified for the reasons I have just outlined, there was simply a succession of fiancées, each flirting with Marx in turn. Only all was not exactly going well. Of course, I am describing it as though I were talking about a very general movement. What I describe did undoubtedly take place and it involved a certain number of individuals; but there were also people who did not follow the movement. I am thinking of those who were interested in the history of science — an important tradition in France, probably since the time of Comte. Particularly around Canguilhem, an extremely influential figure in the French University — the young French University.[3] Many of his students were neither Marxists not Freudians, nor structuralists. And here I am speaking of myself.

G. R.: You were one of those people, then?

Foucault: I have never been a Freudian, I have never been a Marxist, and I have never been a structuralist.

G. R.: Yes, here too, as a formality and just so the American reader is under no misapprehensions, we only need to look at the dates. You began . . .

Foucault: My first book was written toward the end of my student days. It was *Madness and Civilization,* written between '55 and '60. This book is neither Freudian nor Marxist nor structuralist. Now, as it happened, I had read Nietzsche in '53 and, curious as it may seem, from a perspective of inquiry into the history of knowledge — the history of reason: how does one elaborate a history of rationality? This was the problem of the nineteenth century.

G. R.: Knowledge, reason, rationality.

Foucault: Knowledge, reason, rationality, the possibility of elaborating a history of rationality . . . I would say that here again, we run across phenomenology, in someone like Koyré, a historian of science, with his German background, who came to France between 1930 and '33,[4] I believe, and developed a historical analysis of the forms of rationality and knowledge in a phenomenological perspective. For me, the problem was framed in terms not unlike those we mentioned earlier. Is the phenomenological, transhistorical subject able to provide an account of the historicity of reason? Here, reading Nietzsche was the point of rupture for me. There is a history of the subject just as there is a history of reason; but we can never demand that the history of reason unfold at a first and founding act of the rationalist subject. I read Nietzsche by chance, and I was surprised to see that Canguilhem, the most influential historian of science in France at the time, was also very interested in Nietzsche and was thoroughly receptive to what I was trying to do.

G. R.: On the other hand, there are no perceptible traces of Nietzsche in his work . . .

Foucault: But there are; and they are very clear. There are even explicit references; more explicit in his later texts than in his earlier ones. The relation of the French to Nietzsche and even the relation of all twentieth-century thought to Nietzsche was difficult, for understandable reasons . . . But I am talking about myself. We should

also talk about Deleuze.[5] Deleuze wrote his book on Nietzsche around 1960. The book must have appeared in '65. He was interested in empiricism, in Hume, and again in the question: is the theory of the subject which we have in phenomenology a satisfactory one? He could elude this question by means of the bias of Hume's empiricism. I am convinced that he encountered Nietzsche under the same conditions. So I would say that everything which took place in the sixties arose from a dissatisfaction with the phenomenological theory of the subject, and involved different escapades, subterfuges, breakthroughs, according to whether we use a negative or a positive term, in the direction of linguistics, psychoanalysis, or Nietzsche.

G. R.: At any rate, Nietzsche represented a determining experience for the abolition of the founding act of the subject.

Foucault: Exactly. And this is where French writers like Bataille and Blanchot were important for us.[6] I said earlier that I wondered why I had read Nietzsche. But I know very well. I read him because of Bataille, and Bataille because of Blanchot. So, it is not at all true that Nietzsche appeared in 1972. He appeared in 1972 for people who were Marxists during the '60s and who emerged from Marxism by way of Nietzsche. But the first people who had recourse to Nietzsche were not looking for a way out of Marxism. They wanted a way out of phenomenology.

G. R.: You have spoken about historians of science, of writing a history of knowledge, a history of rationality, and a history of reason. Before returning to Nietzsche, could we briefly define the four terms, which might well be taken — in the light of what you have said — to be synonymous?

Foucault: No, no. I was describing a movement which involved many factors and many different problems. I am not saying that these problems are identical. I am speaking about the kinship between the lines of inquiry and the proximity of those who undertook them.

G. R.: All the same, could we try to specify the relation? It is true that this can definitely be found in your books, particularly *The Archaeology of Knowledge.* Nonetheless, could we try to specify these relations between the science, knowledge, and reason?

Foucault: It is not very easy in an interview. I would say that the history of science has played an important role in philosophy in France. I would say that perhaps if modern philosophy (that of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries) derives in great part from the Kantian question, "Was ist Aufklärung?" or, in other words, if we admit that one of the main functions of modern philosophy has been an inquiry into the historical point at which reason could appear in its "adult" form, "unchaperoned," then the function of nineteenth-century philosophy consisted in asking, "What is this moment when reason accedes to autonomy? What is the meaning of a history of reason and what value can be ascribed to the ascendancy of reason in the modern world, through these three great forms: scientific thought, technical apparatus, and political organization?" I think one of philosophy's great functions was to inquire into these three domains, in some sense to take stock of things or smuggle an anxious question into the rule of reason. To continue then . . . to pursue the Kantian question, "Was ist Aufklärung?" This reprise, this reiteration of the Kantian question in France assumed a precise and perhaps, moreover, an inadequate form: "What is the history of science?" What happened, between Greek mathematics and modern physics, as this universe of science was built? From Comte right through the 1960s, I think the philosophical function of the history of science has been to pursue this question. Now in Germany this question "What is the history of reason, of rational forms in Europe?" did not appear so much in the history of science but in the current of thought which runs from Max Weber to Critical Theory.

G. R.: Yes, the meditation on norms, on values.

Foucault: From Max Weber to Habermas. And the same question arises here. How do matters stand with the history of reason, with the ascendancy of reason, and with the different forms in which this ascendancy operates? Now, the striking thing is that France knew absolutely nothing — or only vaguely, only very indirectly — about the current of Weberian thought. Critical Theory was hardly known in France and the Frankfurt school was practically unheard of. This, by the way, raises a minor historical problem which fascinates me and which I have not been able to resolve at all. It is common knowledge that many representatives of the Frankfurt school came to Paris

in 1935, seeking refuge, and left very hastily, sickened presumably — some even said as much — but saddened anyhow not to have found more of an echo. Then came 1940, but they had already left for England and the U.S., where they were actually much better received. The understanding that might have been established between the Frankfurt school and French philosophical thought — by way of the history of science and therefore the question of the history of rationality — never occurred. And when I was a student, I can assure you that I never once heard the name of the Frankfurt school mentioned by any of my professors.

G. R.: It is really quite astonishing.

Foucault: Now, obviously, if I had been familiar with the Frankfurt school, if I had been aware of it at the time, I would not have said a number of stupid things that I did say and I would have avoided many of the detours which I made while trying to pursue my own humble path — when, meanwhile, avenues had been opened up by the Frankfurt school. It is a strange case of nonpenetration between two very similar types of thinking which is explained, perhaps, by that very similarity. Nothing hides the fact of a problem in common better than two similar ways of approaching it.

G. R.: What you have just said about the Frankfurt school (about Critical Theory, if you like) which might, under different circumstances, have spared you some fumblings, is even more interesting in view of the fact that one finds a Negt or a Habermas doffing his hat to you. In an interview I did with Habermas, he praised your "masterly description of the bifurcation of reason" — the bifurcation of reason at a given moment. But I have still wondered whether you would agree with this bifurcation of reason as conceived by Critical Theory — with the dialectic of reason, in other words, whereby reason becomes perverse under the effects of its own strength, transformed and reduced to instrumental knowledge. The prevailing idea in Critical Theory is the dialectical continuity of reason, and of a perversion that completely transformed it at a certain stage — which it now becomes a question of rectifying. That is what seemed to be at issue in the struggle for emancipation. Basically, to judge from your work, the will to knowledge has never ceased to bifurcate in some way or another — bifurcating hundreds of times in the course of history.

Perhaps "bifurcate" is not even the right word . . . Reason has split knowledge again and again.

Foucault: Yes, yes. I think that the blackmail which has very often been at work in every critique of reason or every critical inquiry into the history of rationality (either you accept rationality or you fall prey to the irrational) operates as though a rational critique of rationality were impossible, or as though a rational history of all the ramifications and all the bifurcations, a contingent history of reason, were impossible . . . I think, that since Max Weber, in the Frankfurt school and anyhow for many historians of science such as Canguilhem, it was a question of isolating the form of rationality presented as dominant, and endowed with the status of the one-and-only reason, in order to show that it is only *one* possible form among others. In this French history of science — I consider it quite important — the role of Bachelard, whom I have not mentioned so far, is also crucial.

G. R.: Even so, this praise from Habermas is a little barbed. According to Habermas, you provided a masterly description of the "moment reason bifurcated." This bifurcation was unique. It happened once. At a certain point, reason took a turn which led it towards an instrumental rationality, an auto-reduction, a self-limitation. This bifurcation, if it is also a division, happened once and once only in history, separating the two realms with which we have been acquainted since Kant. This analysis of bifurcation is Kantian. There is the knowledge of understanding and the knowledge of reason, there is instrumental reason and there is moral reason. To assess this bifurcation, we clearly situate ourselves at the vantage point of practical reason, or moral-practical reason. Whence a unique bifurcation, a separation of technique and practice which continues to dominate the entire German history of ideas. And as you said earlier, this tradition arises from the question, "Was ist Aufklärung?" Now, in my view, this praise reduces your own approach to the history of ideas.

Foucault: True, I would not speak about *one* bifurcation of reason but more about an endless, multiple bifurcation — a kind of abundant ramification. I do not address the point at which reason became instrumental. At present, for example, I am studying the problem of techniques of the self in Greek and Roman antiquity; how man, human life and the self were all objects of a certain number of *technai*

which, with their exacting rationality, could well be compared to any technique of production.

G. R.: Without comprising the whole of society.

Foucault: Right. And what led the *techne* of self can very well be analyzed, I think, and situated as a historical phenomenon — which does not constitute *the* bifurcation of reason. In this abundance of branchings, ramifications, breaks and ruptures, it was an important event, or episode; it had considerable consequences, but it was not a *unique* phenomenon.

G. R.: But directly we cease to view the self-perversion of reason as a unique phenomenon, occurring only once in history at a moment that reason loses something essential, something substantial — as we would have to say after Weber — would you not agree that your work aims to rehabilitate a full version of reason? Can we find, for example, another conception of reason implicit in your approach; a project of rationality that differs from the one we have nowadays?

Foucault: Yes, but here, once more, I would try to take my distance from phenomenology, which was my point of departure. I do not believe in a kind of founding act whereby reason, in its essence, was discovered or established and from which it was subsequently diverted by such and such an event. I think, in fact, that reason is self-created, which is why I have tried to analyze forms of rationality: different foundations, different creations, different modifications in which rationalities engender one another, oppose and pursue one another. Even so, you cannot assign a point at which reason would have lost sight of its fundamental project, or even a point at which the rational becomes the irrational. During the 1960s, I wanted to begin as much with the phenomenological account (with its foundation and essential project of reason, from which we have shifted away on account of some forgetfulness and to which we must return) as with the Marxist account, or the account of Lukács. A rationality existed, and it was the form *par excellence* of Reason itself, but a certain number of social conditions (capitalism, or rather, the shift from one form of capitalism to another) precipitated this rationality into a crisis, that is, a forgetting of reason, a fall into the irrational. I tried to take my bearings in relation to these two major models, presented very schematically and unfairly.

G. R.: In these models, we see either a unique bifurcation of a forgetfulness, at a given moment, following the confiscation of reason by a class. Thus the movement across history towards emancipation consists not only in reappropriating what was confiscated (to confiscate it again) but — on the contrary — in giving reason back its truth, intact investing it with the status of an absolutely universal science. For you, clearly — you have made it plain in your writing — there is no project of a new science, or a broader science.

Foucault: Definitely not.

G. R.: But you show that each time a type of rationality asserts itself, it does so by a kind of cut-out — by exclusion or by self-demarcation, drawing a boundary between self and other. Does your project include any effort to rehabilitate this other? Do you think, for example, in the silence of the mad person you might discover a language that would have much to say about the conditions in which works are brought into existence?

Foucault: Yes, what interested me, starting out from the general frame of reference we mentioned earlier, were precisely the forms of rationality applied by the human subject to itself. While historians of science in France were interested essentially in the problem of how a scientific object is constituted, the question I asked myself was this: how is it that the human subject took itself as the object of possible knowledge? Through what forms of rationality and historical conditions? And finally at what price? This is my question: at what price can subjects speak the truth about themselves? At what price can subjects speak the truth about themselves as mad persons? At the price of constituting the mad person as absolutely other, paying not only the theoretical price but also an institutional and even an economic price, as determined by the organization of psychiatry. An ensemble of complex, staggered elements where you find that institutional game-playing, class relations, professional conflicts, modalities of knowledge and, lastly, a whole history of the subject of reason are involved. That is what I have tried to piece back together. Perhaps the project is utterly mad, very complex — and I have only brought a few moments to light, a few specific points such as the problem of

the mad subject and what it is. How can the truth of the sick subject ever be told? That is the substance of my first two books. *The Order of Things* asked the price of problematizing and analyzing the speaking subject, the working subject, the living subject. Which is why I attempted to analyze the birth of grammar, general grammar, natural history, and economics. I went on to pose the same kind of question in the case of the criminal and systems of punishment: how to state the truth of oneself, insofar as one might be a criminal subject. I will be doing the same thing with sexuality, only going back much further: how does the subject speak truthfully about itself, inasmuch as it is the subject of sexual pleasure? And at what price?

G. R.: According to the relation of subjects to whatever they are, in each case, through the constitution of language or knowledge.

Foucault: It is an analysis of the relation between forms of reflexivity — a relation of self to self — and, hence, of relations between forms of reflexivity and the discourse of truth, forms of rationality and effects of knowledge.

G. R.: In any event, it is not a case of exhuming some prehistorical "archaic" by means of archaeology. (You shall see why I ask this question. It directly concerns certain readings of the so-called French Nietzschean current in Germany.)

Foucault: No, absolutely not. I meant this word "archaeology," which I no longer use, to suggest that the kind of analysis I was using was out-of-phase, not in terms of time but by virtue of the level at which it was situated. Studying the history of ideas, as they evolve, is not my problem so much as trying to discern beneath them how one or another object could take shape as a possible object of knowledge. Why, for instance did madness become, at a given moment, an object of knowledge corresponding to a certain type of knowledge? By using the word "archaeology" rather than "history," I tried to designate this desynchronization between ideas about madness and the constitution of madness as an object.

G. R.: I asked this question because nowadays there is a tendency — its pretext being the appropriation of Nietzsche by the new German Right — to lump everything together; to imagine that French Nietzscheanism — if it exists at all — is in the same vein. All these

elements are associated in order to recreate what are fundamentally the fronts of theoretical class struggle, so hard to find nowadays.

Foucault: I do not believe there is a single Nietzscheanism. There are no grounds for believing that there is a true Nietzscheanism, or that ours is any truer than others. But those who found in Nietzsche, more than thirty-five years ago, a means of displacing themselves in terms of a philosophical horizon dominated by phenomenology and Marxism have nothing to do with those who use Nietzsche nowadays. In any case, even if Deleuze has written a superb book about Nietzsche, and although the presence of Nietzsche in his other works is clearly apparent, there is no deafening reference to Nietzsche, nor any attempt to wave the Nietzschean flag for rhetorical or political ends. It is striking that someone like Deleuze has simply taken Nietzsche seriously, which indeed he has. That is what I wanted to do. What serious use can Nietzsche be put to? I have lectured on Nietzsche but written very little about him. The only rather extravagant homage I have rendered Nietzsche was to call the first volume of my *History of Sexuality* "The Will to Knowledge."

G. R.: Certainly, as regards the will to knowledge, I think we have been able to see in what you have just said that it was always a *relation.* I suppose you will detest this word with its Hegelian ring. Perhaps we should say "evaluation" as Nietzsche would; a way of evaluating truth. At any rate, a way in which force, neither an archaic instance nor an originary or original resource, is actualized; and so too, a relation of forces and perhaps already a relation of power in the constituting act of all knowledge.

Foucault: I would not say so. That is too involved. My problem is the relation of self to self and of telling the truth. My relation to Nietzsche, or what I owe Nietzsche, derives mostly from the texts of around 1880, where the question of truth, the history of truth and the will to truth were central to his work. Did you know that Sartre's first text — written when he was a young student — was Nietzschean? "The History of Truth," a little paper first published in a *Lycée* review around 1925. He began with the same problem. And it is very odd that his approach should have shifted from the history of truth to phenomenology, while for the next generation — ours — the reverse was true.

G. R.: I think we are now in the process of clarifying what you mean by "will to knowledge" — this reference to Nietzsche. You concede a certain kinship with Deleuze but only up to a point. Would this kinship extend as far as the Deleuzian notion of desire?

Foucault: No, definitely not.

G. R.: I am asking this question because Deleuzian desire — productive desire — becomes precisely this kind of originary resource which then begins to generate forms.

Foucault: I do not want to take up a position on this, or say what Deleuze may have had in mind. The moment a kind of thought is constituted, fixed or identified within a cultural tradition, it is quite normal that this cultural tradition should take hold of it, make what it wants of it and have it say what it did not mean, by implying that this is merely another form of what it was actually trying to say. Which is all a part of cultural play. But my relation to Deleuze is evidently not that; so I will not say what I think he meant. All the same, I think his task was, at least for a long time, to formulate the problem of desire. And evidently the effects of the relation to Nietzsche are visible in his theory of desire, whereas my own problem has always been the question of truth, of telling the truth, the *wahr-sagen*–what it is to tell the truth–and the relation between "telling the truth" and forms of reflexivity, of self upon self.

G. R.: Yes, but I think Nietzsche makes no fundamental distinction between will to knowledge and will to power.

Foucault: I think there is a perceptible displacement in Nietzsche's texts between those which are broadly preoccupied with the question of will to knowledge and those which are preoccupied with will to power. But I do not want to get into this argument for the very simple reason that it is years since I have read Nietzsche.

G. R.: It is important to try to clarify this point, I think, precisely because of the hold-all approach which characterizes the way this question is received abroad, and in France for that matter.

Foucault: I would say, in any case, that my relation to Nietzsche has not been historical. The actual history of Nietzsche's thought interests me less than the kind of challenge I felt one day, a long time ago, reading Nietzsche for the first time. When you open *The Gay*

Science after you have been trained in the great, time-honored university traditions — Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Husserl — and you come across these rather strange, witty, graceful texts, you say: Well I won't do what my contemporaries, colleagues, or professors are doing; I won't just dismiss this. What is the maximum of philosophical intensity and what are the current philosophical effects to be found in these texts? That, for me, was the challenge of Nietzsche.

G. R.: In the way all this is received at the moment, I think there is a second hold-all concept, that is, postmodernity, which quite a few people refer to and which also plays a role in Germany, since Habermas has taken up the term in order to criticize this trend in all its aspects . . .

Foucault: What are we calling postmodernity? I'm not up to date.

G. R.: . . . the current of North American sociology (Bell) as much as what is known as postmodernity in art, which would require another definition (perhaps a return to a certain formalism). Anyway, Habermas attributes the term postmodernity to the French current, the tradition, as he says in his text on postmodernity, "running from Bataille to Derrida by way of Foucault." This is an important question in Germany, because reflections on modernity have existed for a long time — ever since Weber. What is postmodernity, as regards the aspect which interests us here? Mainly it is the idea of modernity, of reason, we find in Lyotard: a "grand narrative" from which we have finally been freed by a kind of salutary awakening. Postmodernity is a breaking apart of reason; Deleuzian schizophrenia. Postmodernity reveals, at least, that reason has only been one narrative among others in history; a grand narrative, certainly, but one of many, which can now be followed by other narratives. In your vocabulary, reason was *one* form of will to knowledge. Would you agree that this has to do with a certain current? Do you situate yourself within this current; and, if so, how?

Foucault: I must say that I have trouble answering this. First, because I've never clearly understood what was meant in France by the word "modernity." In the case of Baudelaire, yes, but thereafter I think the sense begins to get lost. I do not know what Germans mean by modernity. The Americans were planning a kind of seminar with Habermas and myself. Habermas had suggested the theme of mod-

ernity for the seminar. I feel troubled here because I do not grasp clearly what that might mean, though the word itself is unimportant; we can always use any arbitrary label. But neither do I grasp the kind of problems intended by this term — or how they would be common to people thought of as being "postmodern." While I see clearly that behind what was known as structuralism, there was a certain problem — broadly speaking, that of the subject and the recasting of the subject — I do not understand what kind of problem is common to the people we call postmodern or poststructuralist.

G. R.: Obviously, reference or opposition to modernity is not only ambiguous, it actually confines modernity. Modernity also has several definitions: the historian's definition, Weber's definition, Adorno's definition and Benjamin's of Baudelaire, as you've mentioned. So there are at least some references. Habermas, in opposition to Adorno, seems to privilege the tradition of reason, that is, the Weberian definition of modernity. It is in relation to this that he sees in postmodernity the crumbling away or the breakup of reason and allows himself to declare that one of the forms of postmodernity — the one which is in relation with the Weberian definition — is the current that envisages reason as *one* form among others of will to knowledge — a grand narrative, but *one* narrative among others.

Foucault: That is not my problem, insofar as I am not prepared to identify reason entirely with the totality of rational forms which have come to dominate — at any given moment, in our own era and even very recently — in types of knowledge, forms of technique and modalities of government or domination: realms where we can see all the major applications of rationality. I am leaving the problem of art to one side. It is complicated. For me, no given form of rationality is actually reason. So I do not see how we can say that the forms of rationality which have been dominant in the three sectors I have mentioned are in the process of collapsing and disappearing. I cannot see any disappearance of that kind. I can see multiple transformations, but I cannot see why we should call this transformation a collapse of reason. Other forms of rationality are created endlessly. So there is no sense at all to the proposition that reason is a long narrative which is now finished, and that another narrative is under way.

G. R.: Let us just say that the field is open to many forms of narrative.

Foucault: Here, I think, we are touching on one of the forms — perhaps we should call them habits — one of the most harmful habits in comtemporary thought, in modern thought even; at any rate, in post-Hegelian thought: the analysis of the present as being precisely, in history, a present of rupture, or of high point, or of completion or of a returning dawn, etc. The solemnity with which everyone who engages in philosophical discourse reflects on his own time strikes me as a flaw. I can say so all the more firmly since it is something I have done myself; and since, in someone like Nietzsche, we find this incessantly — or, at least, insistently enough. I think we should have the modesty to say to ourselves that, on the one hand, the time we live in is not *the* unique or fundamental or irruptive point in history where everything is completed and begun again. We must also have the modesty to say, on the other hand, that — even without this solemnity — the time we live in is very interesting; it needs to be analyzed and broken down, and that we would do well to ask ourselves, "What is the nature of our present?" I wonder if one of the great roles of philosophical thought since the Kantian "Was ist Aufklärung?" might not be characterized by saying that the task of philosophy is to describe the nature of the present, and of "ourselves in the present." With the proviso that we do not allow ourselves the facile, rather theatrical declaration that this moment in which we exist is one of total perdition, in the abyss of darkness, or a triumphant daybreak, etc. It is a time like any other, or rather, a time which is never quite like any other.

G. R.: This poses dozens of questions; ones that you have posed yourself in any case. What is the nature of the present? Is the era characterized more than others, in spite of everything, by a greater fragmentation, by "deterritorialization" and "schizophrenia" — no need to take a position on these terms?

Foucault: I would like to say something about the function of any diagnosis concerning the nature of the present. It does not consist in a simple characterization of what we are but, instead — by following lines of fragility in the present — in managing to grasp why and how that-which-is might no longer be that-which-is. In this sense, any

description must always be made in accordance with these kinds of virtual fracture which open up the space of freedom understood as a space of concrete freedom, that is of possible transformation.

G. R.: Is it here, along the fractures, that the work of the intellectual — practical work, quite clearly — is situated?

Foucault: That is my own belief. I would say also, about the work of the intellectual, that it is fruitful in a certain way to describe that-which-is by making it appear as something that might not be, or that might not be as it is. Which is why this designation or description of the real never has a prescriptive value of the kind, "because this is, that will be." It is also why, in my opinion, recourse to history — one of the great facts in French philosophical thought for at least twenty years — is meaningful to the extent that history serves to show how that-which-is has not always been; that is, that the things which seem most evident to us are always formed in the confluence of encounters and chances, during the course of a precarious and fragile history. What reason perceives as *its* necessity, or rather, what different forms of rationality offer as their necessary being, can perfectly well be shown to have a history; and the network of contingencies from which it emerges can be traced. Which is not to say, however, that these forms of rationality were irrational. It means that they reside on a base of human practice and human history; and that since these things have been made, they can be unmade, as long as we know how it was that they were made.

G. R.: This work on the fractures, both descriptive and practical, is field work.

Foucault: Perhaps it is field work and perhaps it is a work which can go further back in terms of historical analysis, starting with questions posed in the field.

G. R.: Would you describe the work on these fracture areas, work in the field, as the microphysics of power, the analytics of power?

Foucault: Yes, it is something like that. It has struck me that these forms of rationality — put to work in the process of domination — deserve analysis in themselves, provided we recognize from the outset that they are not foreign to other forms of power which are put to work, for instance, in knowledge or technique. On the contrary,

there is exchange; there are transmissions, transferences, interferences. But I wish to emphasize that I do not think it is possible to point to a unique form of rationality in these three realms. We come across the same types, but displaced. At the same time, there is multiple, compact interconnection, but no isomorphism.

G. R.: In all eras or specifically?

Foucault: There is no general law indicating the types of relation between rationalities and the procedures of domination which are put to work.

G. R.: I ask this question because there is a scheme at work in a certain number of criticisms made about you. Baudrillard's criticism, for instance, is that you speak at a very precise moment and conceive a moment in which power has become "unidentifiable" through dissemination.[7] This unidentifiable dissemination, this necessary multiplication, is reflected in the microphysical approach. Or, again, in the opinion of Alexander Schubert,[8] you address a point where capitalism has dissolved the subject in a way which makes it possible to admit that the subject has only ever been a multiplicity of positions.

Foucault: I would like to return to this question in a moment, because I had already begun to talk about two or three things. The first is that in studying the rationality of dominations, I try to establish interconnections which are not isomorphisms. Second, when I speak of power relations, of the forms of rationality which can rule and regulate them, I am not referring to Power — with a capital P — dominating and imposing its rationality upon the totality of the social body. In fact, there are power relations. They are multiple; they have different forms, they can be in play in family relations, or within an institution, or an administration — or between a dominating and a dominated class power relations having specific forms of rationality, forms which are common to them, etc. It is a field of analysis and not at all a reference to any unique instance. Third, in studying these power relations, I in no way construct a theory of Power. But I wish to know how the reflexivity of the subject and the discourse of truth are linked — "How can the subject tell the truth about itself?" — and I think that relations of power exerting themselves upon one another constitute one of the determining elements in this relation I am trying to analyze. This is clear, for example, in the first case I exam-

ined, that of madness. It was indeed through a certain mode of domination exercised by certain people upon certain other people, that the subject could undertake to tell the truth about its madness, presented in the form of the other. Thus, I am far from being a theoretician of power. At the limit, I would say that power, as an autonomous question, does not interest me. In many instances, I have been led to address the question of power only to the extent that the political analysis of power which was offered did not seem to me to account for the finer, more detailed phenomena I wish to evoke when I pose the question of telling the truth about oneself. If I tell the truth about myself, as I am now doing, it is in part that I am constituted as a subject across a number of power relations which are exerted over me and which I exert over others. I say this in order to situate what for me is the question of power. To return to the question you raised earlier, I must admit that I see no grounds for the objection. I am not developing a theory of power. I am working on the history, at a given moment, of the way reflexivity of self upon self is established, and the discourse of truth that is linked to it. When I speak about institutions of confinement in the eighteenth century, I am speaking about power relations as they existed at the time. So I fail utterly to see the objection, unless one imputes to me a project altogether different from my own: either that of developing a general theory of power or, again, that of developing an analysis of power as it exists now. Not at all! I take psychiatry, of course, as it is now. In it, I look at the appearance of certain problems, in the very workings of the institution, which refer us, in my view, to a history — and a relatively long one, involving several centuries. I try to work on the history or archaeology, if you like, of the way people undertook to speak truthfully about madness in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. And I would like to bring it to light as it existed at the time. On the subject of criminals, for example, and the system of punishment established in the eighteenth century, which characterizes our own penal system, I have not gone into detail on *all* kinds of power exercised in the eighteenth century. Instead, I have examined, in a certain number of model eighteenth-century institutions, the forms of power that were exercised and how they were put into play. So I can see no relevance whatever in saying that power is no longer what it used to be.

G. R.: Two more rather disconnected questions, which nonetheless strike me as important. Let us begin with the status of the intellectual. We have broadly defined how you conceive the work, the practice even, of the intellectual. Would you be prepared to discuss here the philosophical situation in France along the following general lines? The function of the intellectual is no longer either to oppose the state with a universal reason or to provide it with its legitimation. Is there a connection with this rather strange, disconcerting situation we see today: a tacit kind of consensus among intellectuals with regard to the Left, and at the same time, the complete silence of thought on the Left — something one is tempted to see as forcing the powers of the Left to invoke very archaic themes of legitimation; the Socialist Party Congress at Valence with its rhetorical excesses, the class struggle . . .

Foucault: The recent remarks of the President of the National Assembly to the effect that we must replace the egoist, individualist, bourgeois cultural model with a new cultural model of solidarity and sacrifice . . . I was not very old when Pétain came to power in France, but this year I recognized in the words of this socialist the very tones which lulled my childhood.

G. R.: Yes. Basically, we are witnessing the astonishing spectacle of a power, divested of intellectual logistics, invoking pretty obsolete themes of legitimation. As for intellectual logistics, it seems that as soon as the Left comes to power, no one on the Left has anything to say.

Foucault: It is a good question. First, we should remember that if the Left exists in France — the Left in a general sense — and if there are people who have the sentiment of being on the Left, people who vote Left, and if there can be a substantial party of the Left (as the Socialist party has become), I think an important factor has been the existence of a Left thought and a Left reflection, of an analysis, a multiplicity of analyses, developed on the Left, of political choices made on the Left since at least 1960, which have been made outside the parties. No thanks to the Communist party, though, or to the old S.F.I.O. — which was not dead until '72 (it took a long time to die) — that the Left is alive and well in France.[9] It is because, through the Algerian war for example, in a whole sector of intellectual life

also, in sectors dealing with the problems of daily life, sectors like those of political and economic analysis, there was an extraordinarily lively Left thought. And it did not die at the very moment the parties of the Left became disqualified for different reasons. On the contrary.

G. R.: No, at the time, certainly not.

Foucault: And we can say that the Left survived for fifteen years — the first fifteen years of Gaullism and then the regime which followed — because of that effort. Secondly, it should be noted that the Socialist party was greeted so responsively in large part because it was reasonably open to these new attitudes, new questions and new problems. It was open to questions concerning daily life, sexual life, couples, women's issues. It was sensitive to the problem of self-management, for example. All these are themes of Left thought — a Left thought which is not encrusted in the political parties and which is not traditional in its approach to Marxism. New problems, new thinking — these have been crucial. I think that one day, when we look back at this episode in French history, we will see in it the growth of a new kind of Left thought which — in multiple and non-unified forms (perhaps one of its positive aspects) — has completely transformed the horizon of contemporary Left movements. We might well imagine this particular form of Left culture as being allergic to any party organization, incapable of finding its real expression in anything but *groupuscules* and individualities. But apparently not. Finally, there has been — as I said earlier — a kind of symbiosis which has meant that the new Socialist party is now fairly saturated with these ideas. In any case — something worthy of note — we have seen a number of intellectuals keeping company with the Socialist party. Of course, the Socialist party's very astute political tactics and strategy — and this is not pejorative — account for their coming to power. But here again, the Socialist party came to power after having absorbed a certain number of Left cultural forms. However, since the Congress of Metz, and *a fortiori*, the Congress of Valence — where we heard things such as we discussed earlier — it is clear that this Left thought is asking itself questions.

G. R.: Does this thought itself exist any more?

Foucault: I do not know. We have to bear several complex factors in mind. We have to see, for example, that in the Socialist party, this new Left thought was most active in the circle of someone like Rocard — that the light of Rocard and his group, and of the Rocard current in the Socialist party, is now hidden under a bushel, has had a major effect[10]. The situation is very complex. But I think that the rather wooden pronouncements of many Socialist party leaders at present are a betrayal of the earlier hopes expressed by a large part of this Left thought. They also betray the recent history of the Socialist party and they silence, in a fairly authoritarian manner, certain currents which exists within the party itself. Undoubtedly, confronted with this phenomenon, intellectuals are tending to keep quiet. (I say tending, because it is a journalistic obsession to say that the intellectuals are keeping quiet). Personally, I know several intellectuals who have reacted, who have given their opinion on some measure or on some problem. And I think that if we drew up an exact balance sheet of interventions by intellectuals over the last few months, there would certainly not be any less than before. Anyway, for my part, I have never written as many articles in the press as I have since word went out that I was keeping quiet. Still, let's not worry about me personally. It is true that these reactions are not a kind of assertive choice. They are finely nuanced interventions — hesitant, slightly doubtful, slightly encouraging, etc. But they correspond to the present state of affairs and instead of complaining about the silence of intellectuals, we should recognize much more clearly their thoughtful reserve in response to a recent event, a recent process, whose outcome we do not yet know for certain.

G. R.: No necessary relation, then, between *this* political situation, *this* type of discourse and the thesis, nonetheless very widespread, that reason is power and so we are to divest ourselves of the one and the other?

Foucault: No. You must understand that is part of the destiny common to all problems once they are posed: they degenerate into slogans. Nobody has said, "Reason is power." I do not think anyone has said knowledge is a kind of power.

G. R.: It has been said.

Foucault: It has been said but you have to understand that when I read — and I know it has been attributed to me — the thesis, "Knowledge is power," or "Power is knowledge," I begin to laugh, since studying their *relation* is precisely my problem. If they were identical, I would not have to study them and I would be spared a lot of fatigue as a result. The very fact that I pose the question of their relation proves clearly that I do not *identify* them.

G. R.: Last question. The view that Marxism is doing rather badly today because it drank from the springs of the Enlightenment, has dominated thought, whether we like it or not, since the '70s, if only because a number of individuals — intellectuals — known as the New Philosophers have vulgarized the theme. So, Marxism, we are told, is doing fairly badly.

Foucault: I do not know if it is doing well or badly. It is an idea that has dominated thought, or philosophy; that is the formula I stop at, if you like. I think you are quite right to put the question, and to put it in that way. I would be inclined to say — I nearly stopped you there — that this view has not dominated thought so much as the "lower depths" of thought. But that would be facile. Uselessly polemical. And it is not really fair. I think we should recognize that in France, towards the '50s, there were two circuits of thought which, if not foreign to one another, were practically independent of one another. There was what I would call the university circuits — a circuit of scholarly thought — and then there was the circuit of open thought, or mainstream thought. When I say "mainstream," I do not necessarily mean poor quality. But a university book, a thesis, a course, etc., were things you found in the academic presses, available to university readers. They had scarcely any influence, except in universities. There was the special case of Bergson. That was exceptional. But from the end of the war onwards — and no doubt Existentialism played a part in this — we have seen ideas of profoundly academic origins, or roots (and the roots of Sartre, after all, are Husserl and Heidegger, who were hardly public dancers) addressed to a much broader public than that of the universities. Now, even though there is nobody of Sartre's stature to continue it, this phenomenon has become democratized. Only Sartre — or perhaps Sartre and Mer-

leau-Ponty — could do it. But then it tended to become something within everybody's range, more or less. And for a certain number of reasons. First, there was the dislocation of the university, the growing number of students and professors, etc., who came to constitute a kind of social mass; the dislocation of internal structures and a broadening of the university public; also the diffusion of culture (by no means a negative thing). The public's cultural level, on average, has really risen considerably and, whatever one says, television has played a major role. People come to see that there is a new history, etc. Add to this all the political phenomena — the groups and movements half-inside and half-outside the universities. It all gave university activity an echo which reverberated widely beyond academic institutions or even groups of specialist, professional intellectuals. One remarkable phenomenon in France at the moment is the almost complete absence of specialized philosophy journals. Or they are more or less worthless. So when you want to write something, where do you publish? Where *can* you publish? In the end, you can only manage to slip something into one of the wide-circulation weeklies and general interest magazines. That is very significant. And so what happens — and what is fatal in such situations — is that a fairly evolved discourse, instead of being relayed by additional work which perfects it (either with criticism or amplification), rendering it more difficult and even finer, nowadays undergoes a process of amplification from the bottom up. Little by little, from the book to the review, to the newspaper article, and from the newspaper article to television, we come to summarize a work, or a problem, in terms of slogans. This passage of the philosophical question into the realm of the slogan, this transformation of the Marxist question, which becomes "Marxism is dead," is not the responsibility of any one person in particular, but we can see the slide whereby philosophical thought, or a philosophical issue, becomes a consumer item. In the past, there were two different circuits. Even if it could not avoid all the pitfalls, the institutional circuit, which had its drawbacks — it was closed, dogmatic, academic — nevertheless managed to sustain less heavy losses. The tendency to entropy was less, while nowadays entropy sets in at an alarming rate. I could give personal examples. It took fifteen years to convert my book about madness into a slogan: all mad people

were confined in the eighteenth century. But it did not even take fifteen months — it only took three weeks — to convert my book on will to knowledge into the slogan "Sexuality has never been repressed." In my own experience, I have seen this entropy accelerate in a detestable way for philosophical thought. But it should be remembered that this means added responsibility for people who write.

G. R.: I was tempted for a moment to say in conclusion — in the form of a question — not wanting to substitute one slogan for another: is Marxism not finished then? In the sense you use in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* that a "nonfalsified Marxism would help us to formulate a general theory of discontinuity, series, limits, unities, specific orders, autonomies and differentiated dependencies."

Foucault: Yes. I am reluctant to make assessments about the type of culture that may be in store. Everything is present, you see, at least as a virtual object, inside a given culture. Or everything that has already featured once. The problem of objects that have never featured in the culture is another matter. But it is part of the function of memory and culture to be able to reactualize any objects whatever that have already featured. Repetition is always possible; repetition with application, transformation. God knows in 1945 Nietzsche appeared to be completely disqualified . . . It is clear, even if one admits that Marx will disappear for now, that he will reappear one day. What I desire — and it is here that my formulation has changed in relation to the one you cited — is not so much the defalsification and restitution of a true Marx, but the unburdening and liberation of Marx in relation to party dogma, which has constrained it, touted it and brandished it for so long. The phrase "Marx is dead" can be given a conjunctural sense. One can say it is relatively true, but to say that Marx will disappear like that . . .

G. R.: But does this reference in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* mean that, in a certain way, Marx is at work in your own methodology?

Foucault: Yes, absolutely. You see, given the period in which I wrote those books, it was good form (in order to be viewed favorably by the institutional Left) to cite Marx in the footnotes. So I was careful to steer clear of that.

Notes

Translated by Jeremy Harding.

1. The exact quotation can be found in transcript of the proceedings at Vincennes, December 1969, published in *Le Magazine Littéraire,* No. 121, February 1977. "What you as a revolutionary aspire to is a master. You will have one." (Translator's note).

2. Vincent Descombes, *Le Même et l'autre: quarante-cinq ans de philosophie française* (Paris: Editions de Minuet, 1979); *Modern French Philosophy,* trans. L. Scott-Fox (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980) [Lawrence D. Kritzman].

3. Georges Canguilhem (1904–). Specialist in epistemology and the history of science. Studies the relationship between science and ideology, the specificity of the biological sciences, and the question of normality. Supervisor of Foucault's *doctorat d'état* on *Histoire de la folie* [L.D.K.].

4. Alexandre Koyré (1892–1964). Professor and academic philosopher. He was responsible along with Jean Hyppolite for the introduction of Hegelian dialectics into French thought. It was his course "Introduction à la lecture de Hegel" given from 1934 to 1939 and published in 1947 that generated a philosophical debate for Marxist intellectuals in the immediate postwar period [L.D.K.].

5. Gilles Deleuze (1925–). French philosopher in the Nietzschean tradition and professor at the University of Paris VII. One of the first to theorize the philosophy of difference. Deleuze formulates with Felix Guattari the anti-Oedipus theory (1974). Author of an important study on Foucault (1986) [L.D.K.].

6. Georges Bataille (1897–1962). Early French surrealist and founder of the Collège de Sociologie in 1936–37. Recognized by the literary avant-garde in the late sixties (i.e., the *Tel quel* group) as the creator of a violently erotic writing whose transgressive force is the expression of a mystical quest for the absolute.

Maurice Blanchot (1907–). Novelist and critic known for his contribution to the new critical movement in France [L.D.K.].

7. Jean Baudrillard (1929–). Professor of Sociology at the University of Paris–X (Nanterre). His critical texts examine the question of modernity and the difficulty of deciphering the plethora of signs that the individual encounters in perceiving them. Author of *Oublier Foucault* (1977) [L.D.K.].

8. *Die Decodierung des Menschen* (Focus Verlag, 1981).

9. S.F.I.O. The official name of the French socialist party formed in 1905 from Guesdist and Jauresist factions as the *Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière.*

The party split in 1920 following the Congress of Tours when a majority of its members formed the first French communist party [L.D.K.].

10. Michel Rocard (1930–). Moderate Socialist leader aspiring to the French presidency. He bases his highly "technocratic" politics on socioeconomic reform. Named Prime Minister by Mitterrand in May 1988 [L.D.K.].

6

The Art of Telling the Truth

Michel Foucault

It seems to me that this text [Kant's *Was ist Aufklärung* (What Is Enlightenment?)] introduces a new type of question into the field of philosophical reflection. Of course, it is certainly neither the first step in the history of philosophy, nor even the only text by Kant that schematizes a question concerning history. We find in Kant texts that pose a question of origin to history: the text on the beginnings of history itself and the text on the definition of the concept of race. Other texts pose to history the question of the forms in which it is carried out: thus, in that same year, 1784, we have *The Idea of a Universal History from the Cosmopolitical Point of View.* Then there are others that question the internal finality organizing historical processes — I'm thinking of the text devoted to the use of teleological principles. All these questions, which are indeed closely linked, imbue Kant's analyses of history. It seems to me that the text on the *Aufklärung* is a rather different one; in any case, it does not pose any of these questions directly, neither that of origin, nor, despite appearances to the contrary, that of fulfillment, and it poses to itself in a relatively discreet, almost sidelong way, the question of the teleology immanent in the very process of history.

The question that seems to me to appear for the first time in this text by Kant is the question of the present, the question of what is happening now: What is happening today? What is happening now? And what is this "now" within which all of us find ourselves; and who defines the moment at which I am writing? It is not the first time that one finds in philosophical reflection references to the present,

at least as a particular historical situation that may be valuable for philosophical reflection. After all, when, at the beginning of the *Discourse on Method,* Descartes recounts his own itinerary and all the philosophical decisions that he has taken both for himself and for philosophy, he refers quite explicitly to something that may be regarded as a historical situation in the order of knowledge, of the sciences in his own time. But in this kind of reference, it is always a question of finding, in this configuration designated as the present, a motive for a philosophical decision; in Descartes, you will not find some such question as: "What precisely, then, is this present to which I belong?" Now it seems to me that the question that Kant is answering — indeed that he is led to answer, because it was asked of him — is a quite different one. It is not simply: what is it in the present situation that can determine this or that decision of a philosophical order? The question bears on what this present actually is, it bears firstly on the determination of a certain element of the present that is to be recognized, to be distinguished, to be deciphered among all the others. What is it in the present that produces meaning now for philosophical reflection?

In the answer that Kant tries to give to this question, he sets out to show how this element becomes the bearer and the sign of a process that concerns thought, knowledge, philosophy; but it is a question of showing how he who speaks as a thinker, as a scientist, as a philosopher, is himself part of this process and (more than that) how he has a certain role to play in this process, in which he is to find himself, therefore, both element and actor.

In short, it seems to me that what we see appearing in Kant's text is the question of the present as the philosophical event to which the philosopher who speaks of it belongs. If one sees philosophy as a form of discursive practice that has its own history, it seems to me that with this text on the *Aufklärung* we see philosophy — and I don't think I'm exaggerating when I say that it is for the first time — problematizing its own discursive contemporaneity: a contemporaneity that it questions as an event, as an event whose meaning, value, philosophical particularity it is its task to bring out and in which it has to find both its own raison d'être and the grounds for what it says. And in doing so we see that when the philosopher asks how he belongs to this present it is a quite different question from that of

how one belongs to a particular doctrine or tradition; it is no longer simply the question of how one belongs to a human community in general, but rather that of how one belongs to a certain "us," to an us that concerns a cultural totality characteristic of one's own time.

It is this "us" that is becoming for the philosopher the object of his own reflection. By the same token, the philosopher can no longer avoid the question of the specific way in which he belongs to this "us." All this — philosophy as the problematization of a present, and as the questioning of the philosopher of this present to which he belongs and in relation to which he has to situate himself — might well be said to characterize philosophy as the discourse of modernity on modernity.

To speak very schematically, the question of modernity has already been posed in classical culture in terms of an axis with two poles, that of Antiquity and that of Modernity; it was formulated either in terms of an authority to be accepted or rejected (which authority should we accept? which model should we follow?, etc.), or in the form (which, indeed, is a correlative of the first) of a comparative valuation: are the Ancients superior to the Moderns? Are we living in a period of decline, and so forth? We see rising to the surface a new way of posing the question of modernity, not in a longitudinal relation to the Ancients, but in what might be called a "sagital" relation to one's own present. Discourse has to reassess its being in the present on the one hand, to find its proper place in it, and, on the other hand, to decipher its meaning, to specify the mode of action that it is capable of exercising within that present.

What is my present? What is the meaning of this present? And what am I doing when I speak of this present? This, it seems to me, is what this new questioning of modernity means.

But this is nothing more than a trail, which we must now explore more closely. We must try to trace the genealogy, not so much of the notion of modernity, as of modernity as a question. In any case, even if I take Kant's text as the point of emergence of this question, it is evident that this text itself forms part of a broader historical process that must be taken into account. It would no doubt be one of the interesting axes for a study of the eighteenth century in general, and of the *Aufklärung* in particular, to consider the following fact: the *Aufklärung* calls itself *Aufklärung*. It is certainly a very singular cultural

process that became aware of itself by naming itself, by situating itself in relation to its past and future, and by designating the operations that it must carry out within its own present.

After all, is not the *Aufklärung* the first period that names itself and which instead of simply characterizing itself, according to an old habit, as a period of decline or prosperity, of splendor or misery, names itself through a certain event that belongs to a general history of thought, of reason, and of knowledge and within which it has itself played a part?

The *Aufklärung* is a period, a period that formulates its own motto, its own precepts, and which says what it has to do, both in relation to the general history of thought and in relation to its present and to the forms of knowledge, ignorance, and illusion in which it is able to recognize its historical situation.

It seems to me that in this question of the *Aufklärung* we see one of the first manifestations of a way of philosophizing that has had a lengthy history over the last two centuries. It is one of the great functions of so-called modern philosophy (which may be said to begin at the very end of the eighteenth century) to question itself about its own present.

One might follow the trajectory of this modality of philosophy through the nineteenth century to the present day. The only thing that I would stress at the moment is that Kant did not forget this question, which he dealt with in 1784 in response to a question that had been asked him from the outside. He was to ask it again and try to answer in relation to another event, one that also never ceased to question itself. That event, of course, was the French Revolution.

In 1798, Kant was in a sense to take up again the text of 1784. In 1784, he was trying to answer the question asked him: "What is this *Aufklärung* of which we are a part?" In 1798 he is answering a question which the present was asking him, but which had been formulated since 1794 by all philosophical discussion in Germany. That question was: "What is the Revolution?"

You know that *The Conflict of the Faculties* is a collection of three dissertations on the relations between the different faculties that make up the university. The second dissertation concerns the conflict between the Faculty of Philosophy and the Faculty of Law. Now the whole field of relations between philosophy and law is concerned

with the question: "Is there such a thing as constant progress for mankind?" And, it was in order to answer this question that, in paragraph 5 of this dissertation, Kant reasons in the following way: if one wishes to answer the question "Is there constant progress for mankind?" one must determine whether there exists a possible cause for this progress, but once one has established this possibility, one must show that this cause acts effectively and, to do this, one must locate a certain event that shows that the cause acts in reality. In short, the attribution of a cause will be able to determine only possible effects, or, to be more precise, the possibility of an effect; but the reality of an effect will be able to be established only by the existence of an event.

It is not enough, therefore, to follow the teleological thread that makes progress possible; one must isolate, within history, an event that will have the value of a sign.

A sign of what? A sign of the existence of a cause, of a permanent cause, which, throughout history itself, has guided men on the way of progress. A constant cause that must be shown to have acted in the past, acts now, and will act in the future. Consequently, the event that will be able to allow us to decide whether there is progress will be a sign: *rememorativum, demonstrativum, prognosticum.* It must be a sign that shows that it has always been like that (the rememorative sign), a sign that shows that things are also taking place now (the demonstrative), and a sign that shows that it will always happen like that (the prognostic sign). In this way we can be sure that the cause that makes progress possible has not just acted at a particular moment, but that it guarantees a general tendency of mankind as a whole to move in the direction of progress. That is the question: "Is there around us an event that is rememorative, demonstrative, and prognostic of a permanent progress that affects humankind as a whole?"

You have probably guessed the answer that Kant gives; but I would like to read to you the passage in which he introduces the Revolution as an event that has the value of a sign. "Do not expect this event," he writes at the beginning of paragraph 6, "to consist of noble gestures or great crimes committed by men, as a result of which that which was great among men is made small, or that which was small, made great, nor of gleaming ancient buildings that disappear as if

by magic while others rise, in a sense, from the bowels of the earth to take their place. No, it is nothing like that."

In this text, Kant is obviously alluding to the traditional reflections that seek the proofs of the progress or nonprogress of humankind in the overthrow of empires, in the great catastrophes by which the best established states disappear, in the reversals of fortune that bring low established powers and allow new ones to appear. Be careful, Kant is telling his readers, it is in much less grandiose, much less perceptible events. One cannot carry out this analysis of our own present in those meaningful values without embarking on a decipherment that will allow us to give to what, apparently, is without meaning and value, the important meaning and value that we are looking for. Now what is this event that is not a "great" event? There is obviously a paradox in saying that the Revolution is not a major event. Is this not the very example of an event that overthrows, that makes what was great small and what was small great, and which swallows up the apparently secure structures of society and states? Now, for Kant, it is not this aspect of the Revolution that is meaningful. What constitutes the event that possesses a rememorative, demonstrative, and prognostic value is not the revolutionary drama itself, not the revolutionary exploits, or the gesticulation that accompanies it. What is meaningful is the way in which the Revolution provided a spectacle, the way in which it was welcomed all around by spectators who did not take part in it, but who observed it, attended it, and, for better or for worse, were carried away by it. It is not the revolutionary upheaval that constitutes the proof of progress; because, firstly, it merely inverts things, and secondly, because if one could carry out the Revolution again, one would not do so. This is an extremely interesting text. "It does not matter," he says, "if the revolution of an intelligent people, such as we have seen in our own time [he's therefore speaking of the French Revolution], it does not matter if it succeeds or fails, it does not matter if it piles up miseries and atrocities, to such an extent that a sensible man who might do it over again in the hope of succeeding would never bring himself to attempt the experience at such a price." It is not, then, the revolutionary process that is important, it does not matter whether it succeeds or fails; this is nothing to do with progress, or at least with the sign of progress we are looking for. The failure or success of the

Revolution are not signs of progress or a sign that there is no progress. But even if it were possible for someone to know what the Revolution is, to know how it is carried out, and at the same time to pull it off, then, calculating the necessary cost of this Revolution, this sensible man would not proceed with it. Therefore, as "reversal," as an undertaking that may succeed or fail, as the price that is too heavy to pay, the Revolution cannot in itself be regarded as the sign that there is a cause capable of sustaining the constant progress of humankind through history.

On the other hand, what is meaningful and what is to constitute the sign of progress is that, around the Revolution, there is, says Kant, "a sympathy of aspiration bordering on enthusiasm." What is important in the Revolution is not the Revolution itself, but what takes place in the heads of those who do not make it or, in any case, who are not its principal actors; it is the relationship that they themselves have with that Revolution of which they are not the active agents. The enthusiasm for the Revolution is a sign, according to Kant, of a moral disposition in mankind. This disposition is permanently manifested in two ways: firstly, in the right possessed by all peoples to give themselves the political constitution that suits them and, secondly, in the principle, in accordance with law and morality, of a political constitution so framed that it avoids, by reason of its very principles, all offensive war. Now it is the disposition that leads mankind to such a constitution that is signified by the Revolution. The Revolution as spectacle, and not as gesture, as a focus for enthusiasm on the part of those who observe it and not as a principle of overthrow for those who take part in it, is a "signum rememorativum," for it reveals that disposition, which has been present from the beginning; it is a "signum demonstrativum" because it demonstrates the present efficacity of this disposition; and it is also a "signum prognosticum" for, although the Revolution may have certain questionable results, one cannot forget the disposition that is revealed through it.

We also know very well that these two elements, the political constitution freely chosen by men and a political constitution that avoids war, are also the very process of the *Aufklärung,* in other words the Revolution really is a continuation and culmination of the very process of the *Aufklärung,* and as such the *Aufklärung* and the Revolution are events that can no longer be forgotten. "I maintain," writes Kant,

"that I can predict for mankind even without a prophetic spirit, simply from the appearances and premonitory signs of our period, that it will attain that end, that is to say, arrive at such a state that men will be able to give themselves the constitution they wish and the constitution that will prevent an offensive war, and that henceforth this progress will no longer be questioned. Such a phenomenon in the history of mankind is no longer forgotten because it has revealed in human nature a disposition, a faculty for progress such that no politics would be clever enough to free it from the course prior to the events, only nature and liberty combined in mankind, following the internal principles of right were capable of announcing it, though in an indeterminate manner and as a contingent event. But if the aims of this event were not yet attained, even if the Revolution or the reform of the constitution of a people had finally failed, or if, after a certain lapse of time, everything fell back into the old rut, as certain politicians are now predicting, this philosophical prophecy would lose none of its force. For this event is too important, too implicated in the interests of mankind and of too vast an influence over every part of the world not to be recalled to the people's memory on the occasion of favorable circumstances and remembered at a time of crisis when new attempts of the same kind are being made, for in so important a matter for mankind the forthcoming constitution at last attains for a time that solidity that the teaching of repeated experiences cannot fail to give it in all minds."

In any case the Revolution will always run the risk of falling back into the old rut, but as an event whose very content is unimportant, its existence attests to a permanent potentiality that cannot be forgotten: for future history it is the guarantee of the very continuity of progress.

All I wanted to do was to situate for you this text by Kant on the *Aufklärung;* later, I shall try to read it more closely. I also wanted to see how, some fifteen years later, Kant was reflecting on the French Revolution, which had turned out to be so much more dramatic than anticipated. With these two texts, we are in a sense at the origin, at the starting point, of a whole dynasty of philosophical questions. These two questions — "What is the *Aufklärung*? What is the Revolution?" — are the two forms under which Kant posed the question of his own present. They, are also, I believe, the two questions that

have not ceased to haunt, if not all modern philosophy since the nineteenth century, at least a large part of that philosophy. After all it seems to me that the *Aufklärung*, both as singular event inaugurating European modernity and as permanent process manifested in the history of reason, in the development and establishment of forms of rationality and technology, the autonomy and authority of knowledge, is for us not just an episode in the history of ideas. It is a philosophical question, inscribed since the eighteenth century in our thoughts. Let us leave in their piety those who want to keep the *Aufklärung* living and intact. Such piety is of course the most touching of treasons. What we need to preserve is not what is left of the *Aufklärung*, in terms of fragments; it is the very question of that event and its meaning (the question of the historicity of thinking about the universal) that must now be kept present in our minds as what must be thought.

The question of the *Aufklärung*, or of reason, as a historical problem has in a more or less occult way traversed the whole of philosophical thinking from Kant to our own day. The other face of the present that Kant encountered is the Revolution; the Revolution as at once event, rupture, and overthrow in history, as failure, but at the same time as value, as sign of a disposition that is operating in history and in the progress of humankind. There again the question for philosophy is not to determine what part of the Revolution should be preserved by way of a model. It is to know what is to be done with that will to revolution, that "enthusiasm" for the Revolution, which is quite different from the revolutionary enterprise itself. The two questions — "What is the *Aufklärung*?" and "What is to be done with the will to revolution?" — together define the field of philosophical interrogation that bears on what we are in our present.

Kant seems to me to have founded the two great critical traditions between which modern philosophy is divided. Let us say that in his great critical work Kant laid the foundations for that tradition of philosophy that poses the question of the conditions in which true knowledge is possible and, on that basis, it may be said that a whole stretch of modern philosophy from the nineteenth century has been presented, developed as the analytics of truth.

But there is also in modern and contemporary philosophy another type of question, another kind of critical interrogation: it is the one

we see emerging precisely in the question of the *Aufklärung* or in the text on the Revolution. That other critical tradition poses the question: What is our present? What is the present field of possible experiences? This is not an analytics of truth; it will concern what might be called an ontology of the present, an ontology of ourselves, and it seems to me that the philosophical choice confronting us today is this: one may opt for a critical philosophy that will present itself as an analytic philosophy of truth in general, or one may opt for a critical thought that will take the form of an ontology of ourselves, an ontology of the present; it is this form of philosophy that, from Hegel, through Nietzsche and Max Weber, to the Frankfurt school, has founded a form of reflection in which I have tried to work.

Note

Translated by Alan Sheridan.

7

Taking Aim at the Heart of the Present: On Foucault's Lecture on Kant's *What Is Enlightenment?*

Jürgen Habermas

The current counterpart to neoconservatism is a radical critique of reason stamped by French poststructuralism, which is meeting with a lively response, especially among students and younger intellectuals. In this memorial address for Michel Foucault . . . I tried to bring out the critical impulse in this critique of reason, which occasionally slides off into Germanic obscurity.

Foucault's death came so unexpectedly and so precipitously that one can scarcely resist the thought that the life and teachings of the philosopher were being documented even in the circumstantiality and brutal contingency of his sudden death. Even from a distance, one experiences Foucault's death at fifty-seven as an event whose untimeliness affirms the violence and mercilessness of time — the power of facticity, which, without sense and without triumph, prevails over the painstakingly constructed meaning of each human life. For Foucault, the experience of finiteness became a philosophical stimulus. He observed the power of the contingent, which he ultimately identified with power as such, from the stoic perspective, rather than interpreting it from within the Christian horizon of experience. And yet in him the stoic attitude of keeping an overly precise distance, the attitude of the observer obsessed with objectivity, was peculiarly entwined with the opposite element of passionate, self-consuming participation in the contemporary relevance of the historical moment.

I met Foucault only in 1983, and perhaps I did not understand him well. I can only relate what impressed me: the tension, one that

eludes familiar categories, between the almost serene scientific reserve of the scholar striving for objectivity on the one hand, and the political vitality of the vulnerable, subjectively excitable, morally sensitive intellectual on the other. I imagine that Foucault dug through archives with the stubborn energy of a detective in hot pursuit of evidence. When he suggested to me in March 1983 that we meet with some American colleagues in November 1984 for a private conference to discuss Kant's essay *What Is Enlightenment?*, which had appeared two hundred years earlier, I knew nothing of a lecture on that very subject that Foucault had just given. I had understood his invitation as a call to a discussion in which we, along with Hubert Dreyfuss, Richard Rorty, and Charles Taylor, would debate various interpretations of modernity, using as a basis for discussion a text that in a certain sense initiated the philosophical discourse of modernity. But this was not exactly Foucault's intention in his proposal; I realized that, however, only in May of this year, when an excerpt from Foucault's lecture was published.

In Foucault's lecture we do not meet the Kant familiar from *The Order of Things,* the epistemologist who thrust open the door to the age of anthropological thought and the human sciences with his analysis of finiteness. Instead we encounter a *different* Kant — the precursor of the Young Hegelians, the Kant who was the first to make a serious break with the metaphysical heritage, who turned philosophy away from the Eternal Verities and concentrated on what philosophers had until then considered to be without concept and nonexistent, merely contingent and transitory. In Kant's answer to the question "What is Enlightenment?" Foucault sees the origin of an "ontology of contemporary reality" that leads through Hegel, Nietzsche, and Max Weber to Horkheimer and Adorno. Surprisingly, in the last sentence of his lecture Foucault includes himself in this tradition.

Foucault links the *What Is Enlightenment?* text, which appeared in 1784, with Kant's *Dispute of the Faculties,* which appeared fourteen years later and looks back on the events of the French Revolution. The dispute between the Philosophical Faculty and the Faculty of Law concerned the question whether the human race was involved in continual progress toward the better. In his philosophy of law Kant had clarified the end state in terms of which this progress could be

measured: A republican constitution would ensure the rule of law internally as well as externally: both the autonomy of citizens under laws they had made for themselves and the elimination of war from international relations. In the *Dispute of the Faculties* Kant is looking for an empirical reference point to demonstrate that a "moral tendency" of the human race, observable in history, actually moves toward these postulates of pure practical reason. He is looking for an "event of our time" that indicates a disposition on the part of the human race toward what is morally better; and he finds this "historical sign" not in the French Revolution itself but in the openly manifested enthusiasm with which a broad public had fearlessly greeted these events as an attempt to realize principles of natural law. Such a phenomenon, Kant believes, cannot be forgotten — "for that event is too great, too closely interwoven with the interest of mankind, not to be remembered by the peoples of the world under the inducement of favorable conditions and awakened for renewed attempts of this kind."

Foucault cites these famous sentences not entirely without a "feeling for collaboration in the good" on his part. In the earlier text on enlightenment Kant had still emphasized that revolution never gives rise to "true reform of a way of thinking," a reform that, as he says later in the *Dispute of the Faculties,* finds expression precisely in enthusiasm for the revolution that has since taken place. Foucault connects the two texts in such a way that a synoptic view emerges. From this angle the question "What is Enlightenment?" fuses with the question "What does the revolution mean for us?" A fusion of philosophy with thought stimulated by contemporary historical actuality is thereby accomplished — the gaze that has been schooled in Eternal Truths immerses itself in the detail of a moment pregnant with decision and bursting under the pressure of anticipated possibilities for the future.

Thus Foucault discovers in Kant the *first* philosopher to take aim like an archer at the heart of a present that is concentrated in the significance of the contemporary moment, and thereby to inaugurate the discourse of modernity. Kant drops the classical dispute over the exemplary status of the ancients and the equal stature of the moderns; transforming thought into a diagnostic instrument, he entangles it in the restless process of self-reassurance that to this day has kept modernity in ceaseless motion within the horizon of a new

historical consciousness. For a philosophy claimed by the significance of the contemporary moment, the issue is the relationship of modernity to itself, the *"rapport 'sagital' à sa propre actualité."* Hölderlin and the young Hegel, Marx and the Young Hegelians, Baudelaire and Nietzsche, Bataille and the surrealists, Lukács, Merleau-Ponty, the precursors of Western Marxism in general, and not least, Foucault himself — all of them contribute to the sharpening of the modern time consciousness that made its entrance into philosophy with the question "What is Enlightenment?" The philosopher becomes a contemporary; he steps out of the anonymity of an impersonal enterprise and identifies himself as a person of flesh and blood to whom every clinical investigation of a contemporary period confronting him must be directed. Even in retrospect, the period of the Enlightenment fits the description it gave itself: it marks the entrance into a modernity that sees itself condemned to draw on itself for its consciousness of self and its norm.

If this is even a paraphrase of Foucault's own train of thought, the question arises how such an affirmative understanding of modern philosophizing, a philosophizing that is inscribed in our present and always directed to the relevance of our contemporary reality, fits with Foucault's unyielding critique of modernity. How can Foucault's self-understanding as a thinker in the tradition of the Enlightenment be compatible with his unmistakable critique of precisely this form of knowledge, which is that of modernity?

Wouldn't every line of Kant's philosophy of history, his speculations about a constitution of freedom, about world-citizenship and perpetual peace, his interpretation of revolutionary enthusiasm as a sign of historical progress toward the better — wouldn't every line of all this necessarily provoke the scorn of Foucault the theoretician of power? Hasn't history frozen into an *iceberg* under the stoic gaze of Foucault the archaeologist, an iceberg covered with the crystalline forms of arbitrary discourse formations? (This, at least, is how his friend Paul Veyne sees it.) Doesn't this iceberg begin to demonstrate, under the cynical gaze of Foucault the genealogist, a completely different dynamic than the thought of modernity, with its orientation to contemporary reality, would like to acknowledge — merely a senseless back-and-forth movement of anonymous processes of subjugation in which power and nothing but power keeps appearing in

ever-changing guises? Didn't Foucault, using Kant as an example, reveal in *The Order of Things* the peculiar dynamic of a will to truth for which every frustration is only a new stimulus to an increased production of knowledge which then fails in its turn? Modernity's form of knowledge is characterized by the aporia that the cognitive subject, having become self-referential, rises from the ruins of metaphysics to pledge itself, in full awareness of its finite powers, to a project that would demand infinite power. As Foucault demonstrates, Kant transforms this aporia into a structural principle of his epistemology by reinterpreting the limitations of our finite faculty of cognition as transcendental conditions of a knowledge that progresses on into infinitude. A subject strained to the limits of its structure becomes entangled in the anthropocentric form of knowledge, and this terrain is then occupied by the human sciences, in which Foucault sees an insidious disciplinary force at work. With their pretentious claims that are never made good, in any case, the human sciences put up the dangerous facade of a universally valid knowledge, behind which is hidden the facticity of a sheer will to self-possession through knowledge. Only in the wake of this bottomless will to knowledge are the subjectivity and the consciousness of self that make up Kant's starting point formed.

If we return to the text of Foucault's lecture with these considerations in mind, we do in fact note certain precautionary measures against all too obvious contradictions. Certainly the Enlightenment, which inaugurates modernity, does not represent merely an arbitrary period in intellectual history for us. But Foucault warns us against the pious attitude of those who are intent only on preserving the remains of the Enlightenment. He explicitly (if only parenthetically) establishes the connection to his earlier analyses. Today it cannot be our task, he says, to maintain enlightenment and revolution as ideal models; rather, the important thing is to inquire into the particular historical forces that since the late eighteenth century have both gained acceptance in universalist thought and hidden within it. Foucault opposes the "thinkers of order" who continue on with Kant's epistemological problematic; still in search of the universal conditions under which propositions as such can be true or false, they are caught in an "analytic of truth." In spite of these precautions it is a surprise to find that Foucault now presents the subversive thinkers

who try to grasp the contemporary relevance of their present as the legitimate heirs of the Kantian critique. Under the altered conditions of their own times, they once again pose the fundamental diagnostic question of a modernity engaged in self-reassurance, the question that Kant was the first to pose. Foucault sees himself as carrying on this tradition. For him the challenge of the Kant texts on which his lecture is based consists in deciphering the will that was once revealed in the enthusiasm for the French Revolution. For that is the will to knowledge that the "analytic of truth" cannot acknowledge. Whereas, however, Foucault had previously traced this will to knowledge in modern power formations only to denounce it, he *now* displays it in a completely different light: as the critical impulse that links his own thought with the beginnings of modernity, an impulse worthy of preservation and in need of renewal.

Of the circle of those in my generation engaged in philosophical diagnoses of the times, Foucault has had the most lasting effect on the Zeitgeist, not least of all thanks to the earnestness with which he perseveres in productive contradictions. Only complex thought produces instructive contradictions. Kant became entangled in an instructive contradiction of this kind when he explained revolutionary enthusiasm as a historical sign that allowed an intelligible disposition in the human race to appear within the phenomenal world. Equally instructive is the contradiction in which Foucault becomes entangled when he opposes his critique of power, disabled by the relevance of the contemporary moment, to the analytic of the true in such a way that the former is deprived of the normative standards it would have to derive from the latter. Perhaps it is the force of this contradiction that drew Foucault, in this last of his texts, back into a sphere of influence he had tried to blast open, that of the philosophical discourse of modernity.

Part II

8

Foucault's Theory of Society: A Systems-Theoretic Dissolution of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*

Axel Honneth

The social theory implicit in Michel Foucault's analysis of power is not well represented in the conceptual formulations and sociological considerations of his writings prior to *Discipline and Punish.* Its real substance is indirectly raised in the historical investigations he conducted in the 1970s. There, in keeping with the complete turn to the theory of power, Foucault gives his historical writing the new form of "genealogy." This concept, which is once again oriented to Nietzsche, emerges as the successor to the original project of an archaeological approach to history.[1] The specific contours of the new discipline do not arise from methodological considerations, as was the case in the "archaeology," but follow necessarily from the shift in the object domain. So long as Foucault construes the task of his theory as the investigation of the culturally determining forms of knowledge of European modernity, his form of historical writing contrasts with the prevailing forms of the history of science by virtue of the methodological aim of an artificial distantiation of the object domain. Now, however, since it is the characteristic forms of the exercise of social power that first of all comprise the objects of the theory, his historical writing differs from traditional kinds of social history not by virtue of its unusual methodology, but in terms of the unsuspected dimensions of reality that can be discerned by an optics designed for the phenomena of power. In a text that aims at an interpretation of Nietzsche's understanding of a critical history, Foucault indirectly refers to these premises of his genealogy of history: "Humanity does not gradually progress from combat to combat until

it arrives at universal reciprocity, where the rule of law finally replaces warfare; humanity installs each of its violences in a system of rules and thus proceeds from domination to domination."[2]

However, it is not only the aim of consistently regarding all historical processes as the products of a general movement in the succession of systems of domination, thereby achieving a new meaning for historical events, that constitutes the special character of Foucault's genealogical writing of history. In addition, within the framework of his theory of power, he takes up once more his initial question concerning the cognitive presuppositions under which humans could first be experienced generally as individualized subjects and gives it a more specific formulation. He is no longer interested in the abstract genesis of the concept of subjectivity in the modern sciences; now he is interested in the practical genesis of the modern representations of the subject and morality within the context of strategies of social power. Foucault is able to carry out this reformulation of his initial question by virtue of the basic idea of his theory of power, outlined above. According to this theory, the cognitive production of knowledge accompanies in principle the exercise of social domination over other subjects. Only on the basis of such a premise does it make sense to look for the origin of culturally-influential concepts — and thus also for the genesis of the representations of the subject and morality, which are central to the self-understanding of modernity — within the history of the techniques of social domination. A passage on the indissoluble connection between power and knowledge can thus be seen as programmatic:

> A certain policy of the body, a certain way of rendering the group of men docile and useful. This policy required the involvement of definite relations of knowledge in relations of power; it called for a technique of overlapping subjection and objectification; it brought with it new procedures of individualization. . . . Knowable man (soul, individuality, consciousness, conduct, whatever it is called) is the object-effect of this analytical investment, of this domination-observation.[3]

Since his theory of power regards the production of knowledge and the exercise of domination simply as different sides of the same process, Foucault can easily combine the goal of a history of institutions with the goal of conceptual history [*Begriffsgeschichte*]. To the

extent that research succeeds in exposing the historical development of modern techniques of social integration, it also reveals the conceptual roots of the modern representation of the subject. Following Nietzsche, Foucault now calls "genealogy" a kind of historical writing that integrates into a single investigation the tasks of the history of institutions and conceptual history.

However, Foucault has offered only one historical study that fully satisfies this self-imposed claim to a history guided by a theory of power. This is found in the history of the French system of criminal justice presented in 1975 under the title *Discipline and Punish.* By contrast, in 1976, the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* — subtitled *The Will to Knowledge* — presents only a kind of introduction to the initially planned six volumes. The two investigations stand in a complementary relationship to one another, fixed by the basic theoretical ideas of the theory of power. With the institutional foundation of the penal system, the first study pursues in an exemplary manner the prehistory of those administrative strategies of corporal discipline that were eventually connected to the firmly emplaced system of disciplinary power in advanced societies, whereas the historical prerequisites for the genesis of the "biopolitical" techniques (as Foucault calls the manipulative procedures aimed at the biological conduct of the population) are investigated in the large-scale history of sexuality. According to Foucault, what emerges from the results of the two investigations taken together is not only a social-historical overview of the institutional development of modern forms of social integration, but also a conceptual-historical glimpse into the history of the modern understanding of subjectivity.

Discipline and Punish initially appears to be the paradigm of a perfectly assembled, theoretically generalized history. According to it, the epochal process of change that underlies the modernization of the European penal system from medieval corporal punishment to contemporary forms of incarceration is, from another point of view, simply a social-historical process of evolution, one in which the historical development of contemporary systems of domination can be partially traced. According to Foucault, the form of social integration characteristic of modern societies is constituted through an institutional linking of disciplinary apparatuses that originated independent of one another. Of these, the prison is indeed a typical, though

historically late, example. Foucault's choice of the prison as the object of his historical study already betrays, however, a bit of the prejudice at work in his analysis of the socially integrative achievements of contemporary social systems. As will be shown, he represents the life of developed societies, in a paradoxical inversion of the action-theoretical assumptions of his theory of power, according to the model of total institutions.

The beginning and the end of the process of historical evolution, which Foucault treats as a mere segment of the comprehensive process of the development of the modern system of power, are marked by two images that make up the introduction and the conclusion to his book:[4] the detailed description of a cruel quartering in 1757 in Paris and the description of a plan in 1836 for a penal city designed as a system of total supervision. According to Foucault, the "birth of the prison," which is central to his investigation, lies between these vividly illustrated techniques of social control. The task of the investigation is clearly defined by the context of the theory of power in which it is embedded: In order to demonstrate that the development of punishment can be seen as an institutional contribution to the construction of the modern system of power, Foucault must be able to show that the introduction of prison sentences, which initially had the effect of drastically reducing physical suffering, was not a process guided by considerations of humanity but an optimization of the process of social control. Concealed in the gradual reform of imprisonment was, consequently, a continuous actualization of techniques of social power.

Describing a publicly celebrated execution, Foucault dramatically illustrates the historical starting point of his argument. It concerns a punishment, in which elements of medieval methods of torture are applied, aimed at restoring through a public forum royal sovereignty that had been injured by an offense. Foucault examines the classical system of punishment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in a way that allows the mechanisms directed at the body of the delinquent to emerge. In this way he pursues the basic idea of his theory of power, according to which the characteristics of the techniques of social domination are measured primarily in terms of their effect on the bodily conduct of individuals. So construed, two ritualized treatments of the body dovetail with one another in the classical

system of punishment. Initially, it is torture, that is, the use of physical force in extracting a statement, that, together with the oath that the defendant is forced to swear before the trial, is supposed to bring about the confession in the criminal proceeding. Foucault describes torture as "a torture of the truth":

> Torture was a strict judicial game. And, as such, it was linked to the old tests or trials — ordeals, judicial duels, judgments of God — that were practiced in accusatory procedures long before the techniques of the Inquisition. Something of the joust survived, between the judge who ordered the judicial torture and the suspect who was tortured; the "patient" — this is the term used to designate the victim — was subjected to a series of trials, graduated in severity, in which he succeeded if he "held out," or failed if he confessed.[5]

Judicial torture, according to Foucault, is the essential element in a system of punishment in which the body functions as a locus for ascertaining the truth. After the summation of the evidence and the announcement of the sentence, this form of "corporal technology" is continued in carrying out the penalty, since in the ceremony of public chastisement or execution it is the body of the condemned that stands at the center of any measures. Foucault claims that judicial torture, staged as a spectacle before the public, joins together three juridico-political aspects: First, punishment continues the act of interrogatory torture in which the condemned publicly repeats his confession. Furthermore, torture is immanently connected to the confessed crime, since a kind of symbolic relationship is produced through the chosen means of corporal punishment. Finally, the long duration of the punishment or execution, as a conclusion to the judicial ritual, constitutes a kind of final examination. Of course, the carefully calculated "festival of torture" is itself introduced within the political context of a ritual of domination which contributes to the public manifestation of the sovereign's power. Punishment or execution acquires its central societal function initially in connection with these symbolic strategies of political rule in the "ceremonial by which a momentarily injured sovereignty is reconstituted."[6] It can be seen that the process of the publicly staged torture does not represent a juridico-political relic in the epoch of an enlightened monarchy, and concerns the restitution not of justice but of the power attacked through crime:

We must regard the public execution, as it was still ritualized in the eighteenth century, as a political operation. It was logically inscribed in a system of punishment, in which the sovereign, directly or indirectly, demanded, decided and carried out punishments, in so far as it was he who, through the law, had been injured by the crime. In every offense there was a *crimen majestatis* and in the least criminal a potential regicide. And the regicide, in turn, was neither more nor less than the total, absolute criminal since, instead of attacking, like any offender, a particular decision or wish of the sovereign power, he attacked the very principle and physical person of the prince.[7]

After the description of the phase of penal justice determined by the practices of torture and punishment, the reforms in penal law which Foucault now takes up in his historical reconstruction are of great importance to his line of argument. As it was the "classical" system of thought in his lecture "The Discourse on Language," so now it is also the "classical" system of penal law that for Foucault above all represents the historical contrast with reference to which the specific features of modernization beginning with the transition to the nineteenth century should be sharply distinguished, be it in forms of knowledge or in penal practices. The reform of penal law, which has its philosophical roots in bourgeois social-contract theories and which becomes effective in the second half of the eighteenth century, makes "man" the limit of the legitimacy of punitive authority. In the critique of contemporary techniques of torture, with its argument that penalties should instruct and not take revenge, this reform calls for a humanization of the means employed in the punishment of offenders. At the same time, Foucault relates the many reform proposals that were developed on the basis of this moral argumentation to a calculus of the technique of power whose goal is the restriction of the monarch's judicial arbitrariness and the refinement of the instruments of social control. Thus the penal reform borne by the spirit of the Enlightenment turns out to be a transitional phase in penal techniques which, with the critique of the king's arbitrary will regarding punishments and its lack of principles, only prepares the ground for a thoroughly rationalized social control which precisely encompassed all illegalities:

In short, penal reform was born at the point of junction between the struggle against the super-power of the sovereign and that against the infra-power of

acquired and tolerated illegalities. And if penal reform was anything more than the temporary result of a purely circumstantial encounter, it was because, between this super-power and this infra-power, a whole network of relations was being formed. By placing on the side of the sovereign the additional burden of a spectacular, unlimited, personal, irregular and discontinuous power, the form of monarchical sovereignty left the subjects free to practice a constant illegality; this illegality was like the correlative of this type of power. So much so that in attacking the various prerogatives of the sovereign one was also attacking the functioning of the illegalities. The two objectives were in continuity. And, according to particular circumstances or tactics, the reformers laid more stress on one or the other.[8]

Foucault argues in terms of a historically guided functionalism that steadfastly regards cultural traditions, and thus historically shaped ideas and values, only from the perspective of the objective function they perform in a systemic process characterized by the increase of power. The reform proposals born in the intellectual climate of the Enlightenment thus appear, apart from their subjectively intended content, simply as the means that help to replace a superfluous model of social control with procedures of control that correspond to historical conditions. According to Foucault's interpretation, insofar as the execution of a sentence, in keeping with the employed measures of reform, is no longer conceived as the ritualistic display of sovereign power, but rather is conceived as an act aimed at prevention and the imposition of sanctions, the entire field of delinquency is radically demarcated. Possible punishments are from now on sufficiently differentiated to be able to join, more or less symbolically and for the purpose of instruction and deterrence, a specific penalty to each particular type of delinquency. A perfection of means at the level of criminal prosecution corresponds to this functional transformation in punishment, which instead of referring only to the committed offense now refers to all possible offenses in the future. For the critique of the judicial will of the monarch, although it was influenced ethically by early bourgeois theories of democracy, brings about a decentralization of penal power, and as a result the fight against crime is able to invade recesses of society that were previously uncontrolled.

At this point, however, an obvious ambiguity is connected to the functionalistic reference system that Foucault has from the outset incorporated into his historical investigation. It is contained in the

formulation asserting that the instruments of social control that are connected with the reformed methods of punishment are technologically "more effective." It is unclear whether the effectiveness of the means of social control is to be measured by criteria fixed by the institutional framework of a given social order or by the criteria set by a process of increasing social control that is independent of a specific social order. In the first case the standard that defines the exercise of social control changes with the transformation of the forms of social domination, and the measure of the effectiveness of social control would depend upon the particular conditions by which a specific form of social organization is shaped. In the second case the reference that defines the exercise of social control is historically invariant; it is determined by an objectively describable optimum of control which makes it possible to measure the effectiveness of individual forms of social control apart from the institutional framework in which they are administratively located.

Differences significant for Foucault's method are connected with the distinction between these two possibilities of a functionalist analysis. In the first case, it would be necessary to clarify the institutional conditions in terms of whose maintenance the worths of specific instruments for the exercise of social domination are measured. At the center of this analysis stands the economic and political order in relation to which the means of control appropriate to it are examined.[9] Corresponding to this within Foucault's study is a reference to a new range of criminal offenses that emerge with the capitalist transformation of the economy and to which the now-dominant bourgeoisie, by employing effective means of social control, must respond.[10] It is, of course, unwarranted to claim that the newly developed procedures of control are more effective than the instruments of social control found in prebourgeois forms of domination, since they serve the maintenance and stability of a different social order, a new institutional framework. However, Foucault seems to claim precisely this; comparing the two types of social control, he speaks of an augmentation of social power.[11] From this we can infer that he is secretly inclined toward the second model of a functionalist analysis. What stands in the center of this model is not a given social order but a process of increasing social power, from which it is assumed that this process fulfills functions in connection with invariant

problems of reference. If Foucault follows such a methodological procedure, he must attempt to observe all social processes from the functionalist perspective, not of the maintenance, but rather of the augmentation of power; in other words, from the viewpoint of the objective aim of a maximum control of all processes of social life.

That Foucault in fact pursues the second version of a functionalist analysis, that he thus goes beyond the criteria of a given social order and makes the world-historical process of the augmentation of power of social systems as a whole the background of his investigation, can be clearly seen in the next step of his argument, which is connected to the concise presentation of the era of reform and which turns to the question that is now decisive. Foucault assumes that the penal reforms inspired by the moral spirit of the Enlightenment were of short duration and of little effect. Although the prison as a means of punishment had a subordinate importance in the differentiated system of publicly instructive punishment intended by the reformers, it actually assumed the dominant role in penal law within a short period of time.[12] With its institutionalization, a historically new principle of punishment is opposed to the model of punishment presented so far. What imprisonment designates is not the publicly staged correction of the absolutist epoch or the socially demonstrated penal practice of the reform phase, but the uninterrupted force achieved through a disciplining of the body concealed from the public. In view of these differences in the social logic of punishment, it is of course the rapid and all-encompassing process that, according to Foucault's interpretation, allowed imprisonment to become the central means of punishment within only a few decades that is the historical event which a history of penal law urgently needs to explain: "How then could detention," so reads the question decisive for the entire study, "become in so short a time one of the most general forms of legal punishment?"[13]

In the attempt to find an answer to this question, Foucault proceeds methodically in two stages. In one stage he attempts to identify the social problematic that at the end of the eighteenth century could force such a transformation of social techniques of punishment into the instruments of imprisonment. In the other stage he attempts, in a wide-ranging sketch, to bring out the contours of a prehistory of corporal discipline, reaching back to the Middle Ages, that created

the technical and cognitive presuppositions that made possible the relatively quick application of the methods of punishment employed in the prison system. The most extensive and undoubtedly the most impressive part of Foucault's study is devoted to this second task. It takes the form of a systematic overview of the historical process by which the techniques of the methodically trained disciplining of the body were formed in European modernity. For this Foucault takes as a basis an administrative learning process in which different institutions of socialization, extending from the monasteries to the military schools, each within its own setting, gradually developed knowledges and procedures that, though not coordinated, brought about the goal of a detailed normalization of human bodily conduct. Within the historical panorama that arises on the presupposition of that basic idea, it is not difficult to perceive the institutional prehistory of those techniques of power that have already been presented on the theoretical level in connection with the three concepts of norm, body, and knowledge:

> The "invention" of this new political anatomy [bodily discipline — A.H.] must not be seen as a sudden discovery. It is rather a multiplicity of often minor processes, of different origin and scattered location, which overlap, repeat, or imitate one another, support one another, distinguish themselves from one another according to their domain of application, converge and gradually produce the blueprint of a general method. They were at work in secondary education at a very early date, later in primary schools; they slowly invested the space of the hospital; and, in a few decades, they restructured the military organization. . . . On almost every occasion, they were adopted in response to particular needs: an industrial innovation, a renewed outbreak of certain epidemic diseases, the invention of the rifle or the victories of Prussia. This did not prevent them being totally inscribed in general and essential transformations, which we must now try to delineate.[14]

Foucault deploys all his scientific skill in the description of the methods, techniques, and knowledges that were formed out of the different disciplinary moments since the sixteenth century for standardizing and training the conduct of human bodies. Toward this end, he distinguishes between procedures of direct bodily training and strategies that accompany the control of conduct. Within the first class of disciplinary methods Foucault includes those techniques whose task it is to force the motor and gestural movements of the

body into a routinized mode of conduct. Foucault uncovers four such training procedures:[15] First, there are the techniques of a spatial distribution of human bodies — in the monastery, in the school, or in the workhouse, individuals are arranged according to function or rank in isolated locations and spaces. Second, there are the procedures of a temporal rationalization of all bodily conduct — bodily movements were dissected into individual acts that were specialized in terms of the handling of objects such as tools or weapons. Third, there is the attempt at a temporal formation of the methods of training themselves — the steps of discipline were located in an "analytic-evolutive" time so that they themselves could be organized and planned. Finally, there is the stage of a combination of the trained body and an ordered functional context — within the army or the workshop, the bodily activity of an individual is systematically synchronized with the activities of other individuals.

This list of disciplinary techniques enables Foucault to view the historical process of the discipline of the body not only within the usual context of the places of early capitalistic production but also as imbedded in a comprehensive complex of institutions effective for socialization.[16] In addition to this, Foucault presents a series of procedures in which the forceful routinization of modes of conduct is continuously regulated and theoretically evaluated. Here Foucault identifies three different procedures of control:[17] First, there is a constant and detailed surveillance of routinized activity that finally takes the form of an architectural design for places of education and work. Second, there is the practice of the "normalizing" judgment, in which unlawful violations of the regulations regarding time and the rules pertaining to the body are corrected by firm admonitions and punishment. And finally, as a third procedure, there is the method of "examination," which again brings together all the techniques of control: "The examination combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those of a normalizing judgment. It is a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish."[18]

Foucault's historical survey culminates in the image of the "examination" not only because he sees the regulated combination of all other methods of control at work in it, but, primarily, because he perceives in it the institutional source of the modern mode of think-

ing that views humans as individuated subjects. This is, accordingly, the place in *Discipline and Punish* where the goals of a history of institutions are combined with those of a conceptual history [*Begriffsgeschichte*], as this was programmatically announced under the name "genealogy." Foucault thus begins with a basic idea that is instructive. He assumes that the institutional possibilities for an experience of personal individuality increased in Western modernity in connection with the power of a social class. Under the conditions of the absolutist monarchies, Foucault argues, only the members of the feudal manor who were free to assert themselves in ritual, in written accounts, or in visual reproductions were capable of becoming individuals. This social gradient marking the individual was reversed, however, with the gradual establishment of the examination as the central mechanism of control, since only with it could members of the subordinate classes now be individually documented: "In a disciplinary regime, . . . individualization is 'descending': as power becomes more anonymous and more functional, those on whom it is exercised tend to be more strongly individualized; it is exercised by surveillance rather than ceremonies, by observation rather than commemorative accounts, by comparative measures that have the 'norm' as reference rather than genealogies giving ancestors as points of reference; by 'gaps' rather than by the acts of superiors."[19]

What would today be investigated in sociologically oriented biographical research as the administrative constitution of individual courses of life is perceived in this line of argumentation as a process historically rooted in the examination procedures of the early poorhouses, workhouses, and hospitals.[20] Thereby, the capacity to report one's own biography in standardized form also becomes understandable as the pedagogical result of a process that serves to control social conflicts. But Foucault seeks more for his study from this fruitful line of thought. Beyond this social-historical line of argumentation, he also attempts to derive an insight relating to the sociology of knowledge. This occurs when he abruptly derives from the thesis that in disciplinary centers individual courses of life were produced for administrative ends the conclusion that the psychic inner life of humans is first capable of developing under the force of a gradually intensifying bodily discipline. Thus, not only the capacity for biographical self-presentation but even the capacity for individual experiences of

the self is a practical consequence of the discipline imposed on bodily conduct. Furthermore, Foucault then infers that the concept of the "soul," in which the psychic processes were comprehended, must also be derived solely from the contexts of the institutional practices of bodily domination. In this way he is finally able, apparently without any difficulty, to derive a "genealogy of the human soul" from the history of the methods of administrative control:

> Rather than seeing this soul as the reactivated remnants of an ideology, one would see it as the present correlative of a certain technology of power over the body. It would be wrong to say that the soul is an illusion, or an ideological effect. On the contrary, it exists, it has a reality, it is produced permanently around, on, within the body by the functioning of a power that is exercised on those punished — and, in a more general way, on those one supervises, trains and corrects, over madmen, children at home and at school, the colonized, over those who are stuck at a machine and supervised for the rest of their lives. This is the historical reality of this soul, which, unlike the soul represented by Christian theology, is not born in sin and subject to punishment, but is born rather out of methods of punishment, supervision and constraint. This real, non-corporal soul is not a substance; it is the element in which are articulated the effects of a certain type of power and the reference of a certain type of knowledge, the machinery by which the power relations give rise to a possible corpus of knowledge, and knowledge extends and reinforces the effects of this power.[21]

Of course, to the extent that Foucault's coarsely woven epistemology is unconvincing, the attempt, from within a theory of power, to derive the concept of the "soul" from the historical process of bodily discipline will also sound implausible. Foucault's argument not only leaves peculiarly unclear whether it is the origin of psychic life itself or the origin of the conceptual representation of psychic life that he wants to uncover; it also contradicts in a striking way the results of investigations, such as Durkheim's sociology of religion, that are more empirically founded and that attempt to deduce sociologically the genesis of the concept of the "soul."[22] But the specific deficit of Foucault's argument undoubtedly consists in the fact that it deduces first from social influences (which are themselves presented as merely external coercive procedures that produce subjects) the formation of a sort of psychic life of humans, and it then connects the representation of the "human soul" directly to this. If Foucault really supposes he has in this way worked out the origin of human subjectivity,

then he must have been led astray by a very crude version of behaviorism that represents psychic processes as the result of constant conditioning: Under the pressure exercised on them in the confession and the obligation to speak the truth, humans would have discovered motives and experiences in a place where nothing "in itself" exists. Such an odd picture, in which psychic life is interpreted as the artificial product of a socially induced confession and in which the concept of the "soul" is conceived as its image within the world of human ideas, subsequently explains why Foucault so stubbornly refuses to regard the discipline of the human body as a historical process in which physical and psychical processes are inseparably affected.

However, the disquieting consequences to which Foucault's "genealogy of the soul" leads now have a twofold significance for the question that interests us. For what urgently needs clarification is the question of what kind of functionalist method of analysis Foucault employs in the explanation of the historical development of the techniques of punishment and especially of the rapid expansion of incarceration at the beginning of the nineteenth century. So far it is only clear how he can make intelligible the technical and cognitive conditions that within this time period made possible a rapid reorientation of the punitive procedures around the means of corporal discipline. Toward this end Foucault begins with what can be called a strategic learning process of pedagogic, military, and industrial institutions in which, since the Middle Ages, methodical knowledge and technical ability were gathered which at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries only needed to be applied to enable the extensive formation and administration of the prison. Nevertheless, as has been said above, only the technical and cognitive presuppositions have thereby been clarified — but not the historical causes that in a relatively short time were able to bring about the introduction of imprisonment as the central technique of punishment. Foucault is thus logically driven to a second step in his argument in which the social-historical conditions that actually brought about the transformation in penal politics in the presumed time period have to be identified. The way that Foucault now attempts to answer the second question raised by his explanatory ac-

count reveals for the first time the basic systems-theoretic idea that finally connects his social theory to the historical investigations.

Foucault does not approach the question directly, but by way of a theoretical detour. He is convinced that the establishment of the prison system is realized in connection with a universal transformation of techniques of social power. Hence he must first analyze the process and the cause of this comprehensive process of transformation before he can consider, as an accompanying phenomenon, the "birth of the prison." From Foucault's point of view, the new techniques of power result from the fact that during the course of the eighteenth century the disciplinary institutions that had existed alongside one another in society in an unconnected manner grew together into a kind of self-regulating system. What was historically new was thus not found in the peculiarity of the employed methods of corporal discipline; rather,

> what was new, in the eighteenth century, was that, by being combined and generalized, they attained a level at which the formation of knowledge and the increase of power regularly reinforce one another in a circular process. At this point, the disciplines crossed the "technological" threshold. First the hospital, then the school, then, later, the workshop were not simply "reordered" by the disciplines: they became, thanks to them, apparatuses such that any mechanism of objectification could be used in them as an instrument of subjection, and any growth of power could give rise in them to possible branches of knowledge; it was this link, proper to the technological systems, that made possible within the disciplinary element the formation of clinical medicine, psychiatry, child psychology, educational psychology, the rationalization of labor. It is a double process, then: an epistemological "thaw" through a refinement of power relations; a multiplication of the effects of power through the formation and accumulation of new forms of knowledge.[23]

This line of thought is valid only to the extent that additional information, beyond what we already know from our basic conceptual reconstruction of Foucault's theory of power, can clarify how the historical formation of those modern techniques of domination, which are presented as a process of circulation between the increase in knowledge and the expansion of power, could have taken place. Foucault assumes that this occurred as the social product of a historical process in which the disciplinary centers that initially operated independent of one another were connected to a network of mu-

tually coordinated and reciprocally linked institutions. That is, only to the extent that the thus-far-autonomous organizations were first brought together in a way that permitted the regulated exchange of information could the constant circulation of knowledge that is henceforth supposed to represent the presupposition of an optimal exercise of power be institutionally secured. However, Foucault does not identify the social groups through whose practical initiatives the initially isolated disciplinary centers were institutionally linked, nor does he characterize the societal institution generally responsible for bringing about such an intermeshing of systems of action. Rather, he is content with a pointed sketch of a historical problem under the weight of which he assumes the process of institutional fusion took place. He thus distinguishes two aspects of a social conjuncture that, according to his view, occurred in those societies of the eighteenth century that underwent capitalist development:

> One aspect of this conjuncture was the large demographic thrust of the eighteenth century; an increase in the floating population . . .; a change of quantitative scale in the groups to be supervised or manipulated (from the beginning of the seventeenth century to the eve of the French Revolution, the school population had been increasing rapidly, as had no doubt the hospital population; by the end of the eighteenth century, the peacetime army exceeded 200,000 men). The other aspect of the conjuncture was the growth in the apparatus of production, which was becoming more and more extended and complex; it was also becoming more costly and its profitability had to be increased.[24]

Foucault apparently takes the increase in population and the development of productive forces to be the problems to which societies respond through the formation of power strategies. Since now, in the process of capitalist modernization, these two problems assume such drastic proportion — largely because the peasants were driven from their original places of production and because the economic process was accelerated through the beginning of capital formation — society must respond, Foucault concludes, to the historically acute situation with an increase in its capacity to control; that is, with an optimization of the strategies of power socially established thus far. This occurs precisely on the way to an institutional linking of the initially isolated disciplinary centers:

The development of the disciplinary methods corresponded to these two processes, or rather, no doubt, to the new need to adjust their correlation. Neither the residual forms of feudal power, nor the structures of the administrative monarchy, nor the local mechanisms of supervision, nor the unstable, tangled mass they all formed together could carry out this role: they were hindered from doing so by the irregular and inadequate extension of their network, by their often conflicting functioning, but above all by the "costly" nature of the power that was exercised in them.[25]

In view of the specific problems determined by the increased mobility of the population and by accelerated economic growth, the disciplinary moments represent an appropriate means for securing social power. First, they are able to do without the prestigious expenditure of feudal forms of power, and thus they are cheaper; second, they represent a system of surveillance that reaches across every sphere of social life, and thus they are more effective in terms of control; finally, through the continuous discipline of bodily conduct they increase the capacity for individual achievement, and thus they are more productive in economic output. Foucault thus speaks of the "threefold aim" of the "disciplinary regime":

The peculiarity of the disciplines is that they try to define in relation to the multiplicities a tactics of power that fulfills three criteria: firstly, to obtain the exercise of power at the lowest possible cost (economically, by the low expenditure it involves; politically, by its discretion, its low exteriorization, its relative invisibility, the little resistance it arouses); secondly, to bring the effects of this social power to their maximum intensity and to extend them as far as possible, without either failure or interval; thirdly, to link this "economic" growth of power with the output of the apparatuses (educational, military, industrial or medical) within which it is exercised; in short, to increase both the docility and the utility of all the elements of the system.[26]

From this perspective, in which the functional qualities of the newly established techniques of power are once again presented as a whole, the methodological process that *Discipline and Punish* implicitly seems to follow can be fully seen for the first time. Foucault evidently conducts his historical research within the framework of a systems theory that conceives the form of social organization as a temporary complex of power strategies by which the invariant problems of demographic growth and economic reproduction are overcome. The institutions and mechanisms of social domination are grasped as temporary solutions for tasks posed within society by the fact that the

conduct of a steadily growing portion of the population must be coordinated with the requirements of a correspondingly expanding process of production.[27] The institutional solutions are temporary because each new stage in the development of the population and in the expansion of productive forces requires an increase in societal steering capacities, that is, an optimizing of strategies of social power. Societal institutions can do this because, by way of a trans-subjective learning process, they cumulatively improve the means of exercising power. Under the conditions of early capitalism, both cardinal problems in the maintenance of social power become especially acute because the need for controlling the growth of the population increases along with the need for maintaining the productive process. The system of social power responds to this historically acute situation of conflict through an institutional linking of the disciplinary institutions into one circulating system. The prospect is thereby opened up, historically for the first time, for a social condition in which the organized complex of power is itself now able to control the initially independent problems to the extent that, with the help of applied techniques, it learns to manipulate directly biological behavior as well as the productive achievements of individuals, that is, the growth of the population and the capacity for labor.

If such a pointed sketch of the systems-theoretic model of thought that underlies Foucault's historical research has been appropriately rendered, some aspects of his argument that have hardly been noticed so far are easily accommodated within a common frame of thought.

First, it becomes clear why Foucault consistently gives such scant attention to the form of economic organization of the societies he studies. From the perspective of a systems theory, as is apparently to be found in *Discipline and Punish,* the economic process is presented as a mere backdrop to the system of social power; thus, it merits increased interest only when, owing to changes, it confronts the exercise of social power with new problems of adaptation.

Second, if the proposed systems theory is assumed as a framework for argument, it is also understandable why in his social-historical studies Foucault gives only scant attention to the strategic considerations with which social groups seek to secure and widen their positions of social power. In fact, there is now a theoretical reason why,

in his historical examination, Foucault disregards the dimension of social struggle, even though he had initially grounded his theory of power conceptually in a model of strategic action: As soon as societal evolution is conceived only as a process of the augmentation of social power carried out according to the logic of periodic adaptations to the environment, as is obviously the case in Foucault's historical examination, it follows that the classes that dominate at any given time are viewed as the mere bearers of systemic processes, that is, as a quantity that can in principle be ignored. Rather than forming the practical ground for the institutionalization of forms of domination, social conflicts are the everyday plain over which the systemic process paves the way.

From the other side, finally, those elements of Foucault's argument that bear the traits of a crude behaviorism also acquire a fundamentally mechanistic conception. From the perspective of a systems theory that views societal processes as systemic processes of the augmentation of power, modes of human conduct themselves, especially their bodily life expressions, are only material to be shaped by the power strategies operative at a given time. By contrast, had Foucault consistently followed the trace of his original model of action, in which existing forms of social domination were judged to be products of social conflict and not merely results of a systemic process of adaptation, he would not have been prevented from conceptually endowing social actors with those motives that first make it possible in general to produce political revolution and thus social conflict.

Thus, a systems theory one-sidedly restricted to steering processes is exposed as the juncture at which Foucault's theoretical convictions come together like threads. But even if the scattered elements of the argument gradually come together in a united whole we are still not finished with our reconstruction of Foucault's historical exposition. His explanation of the social processes that led to the transformation in penal practices at the beginning of the nineteenth century and that thus permitted the prison to become the basic means of punishment still remains. The interpretation Foucault offers for this process at the conclusion of his study is extremely terse. It follows as a simple conclusion to the functionalistic argument with which he has already explained the historic transformation of the techniques of social

power in general. If it is viewed in this comprehensive context, the generalization in criminal law of carceral punishment turns out to be merely the consequence of an accommodation of punishment to the new mechanisms of the exercise of power, that is, an institutional assimilation of the methods of punishment to the disciplinary institutions that have, in the meantime, blended together into a complex whole: "One can understand the self-evident character that prison punishment very soon assumed. In the first years of the nineteenth century, people were still aware of its novelty; and yet it appeared so bound up and at such a deep level with the very functioning of society that it banished into oblivion all the other punishments that the eighteenth-century reformers had imagined. It seemed to have no alternative, as if carried along by the very movement of history."[28]

Internally, the prison operates according to the same methods that were already typical in other disciplinary institutions. It subjects the legally condemned to the force of a constant surveillance and a continuous disciplining of the body. Since it employs these procedures so exclusively that its organizational existence, so to speak, consists in them, in a final turn in his study Foucault now attempts to present the prison as institutionally paradigmatic for all other organizations in highly developed societies: "Is it surprising that the cellular prison, with its regular chronologies, forced labor, its authorities of surveillance and registration, its experts in normality, who continue and multiply the functions of the judge, should have become the modern instrument of penalty? Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons?"[29]

Foucault does not distinguish between social organizations in which membership is regulated on the basis of juridically free contracts and total institutions in which membership is coerced on the basis of legal orders. He can pass over these decisive differences without notice because he has already defined law and morality as mere means for the cultural concealment of strategic goals.[30] Admittedly, legal norms and moral ideas no longer represent the historically variable superstructure to the invariant core of social struggle, as they initially did in his theory of power; rather, they function as the cultural superstructure of a systemic process of the augmentation of power, insofar as he has silently replaced the action-theoretic

model with the systems-theoretic concept. In a sort of diagnostic conclusion to his historical argumentation in which he projects the results of the structural change of power into the present, Foucault can define the type of social integration that underlies modern societies according to the model of total institutions without substantially having to take into consideration the universal achievements of bourgeois law. Just as in the prison, in which the confined are subjected to a complex system of constant observation and continuous disciplining, so today the population as a whole is controlled through a network of disciplinary institutions spanning all spheres of social life. The title that Foucault gives to this compulsory form of social order is "panopticism." It is supposed to make clear that social conformity is secured only by way of a permanent and detailed regulation of conduct wherein the leading organs are those institutions of control that are linked together in a closed and regulated system. Thus, Foucault's study ends with a new vision of a "one-dimensional society" in which subjects are forced to adapt not through the manipulation of their psychic drives but through the disciplining of their bodily behavior:

> Historically, the process by which the bourgeoisie became in the course of the eighteenth century the politically dominant class was masked by the establishment of an explicit, coded and formally egalitarian juridical framework, made possible by the organization of a parliamentary, representative regime. But the development and generalization of disciplinary mechanisms constituted the other, dark side of these processes. The general juridical form that guaranteed a system of rights that were egalitarian in principle was supported by these tiny, everyday, physical mechanisms, by all those systems of micro-power that are essentially non-egalitarian and asymmetrical that we call the disciplines. . . . The real, corporal disciplines constituted the foundation of the formal, juridical liberties. The contract may have been regarded as the ideal foundation of law and political power; panopticism constituted the technique, universally widespread, of coercion. It continued to work in depth on the juridical structures of society, in order to make the effective mechanisms of power function in opposition to the formal framework that it had acquired. The "Enlightenment," which discovered the liberties, also invented the disciplines.[31]

As if to underscore the intellectual kinship once more, the last sentence cited above reiterates the quintessence of Foucault's study in words that could have been taken directly from the *Dialectic of*

Enlightenment. In fact, viewed from this conclusion to the study of the prison, the agreement between Adorno's philosophy of history and Foucault's social theory, evident in these common formulations, is at first so striking that it threatens to conceal specific differences. Apparently like Adorno, in his historical investigation Foucault equates the course of European history with the force of a rationalization process in which the means of domination are gradually perfected under the veil of moral emancipation. What Foucault calls the "dark side" of the modern civilizing process Adorno and Horkheimer in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* conceive as the "subterranean history" of Europe.[32] Apparently like Adorno, Foucault also assumes that the process of technical rationalization that determines the course of European history from below ground and is vaguely circumscribed by the period of the "Enlightenment" accelerates and intensifies to the extent that the practical realization of domination was methodologically controlled and reflexively optimized by the development of the natural and human sciences. As a result, both theoreticians are compelled to view the outcome of scientific activity as a whole, notwithstanding methodological characteristics and real relations, as a knowledge of domination. Finally, like Adorno, Foucault seems to see the process of technical rationalization as culminating in the "totalitarian" organizations of domination of highly developed societies. Both theoreticians conceive its stability solely as the effect of the one-sided activity of administratively highly perfected organizations. According to the common view of Adorno and Foucault, neither social groups nor the normative convictions and cultural orientations of socialized subjects have a role in the social integration of late-capitalist societies. It is solely the work of the steering accomplishments of an independent systemic organization. Adorno sees these steering accomplishments as produced by the planning and manipulative activities of a centralized administration. Foucault, by contrast, believes that the necessary accomplishments secured by the controlling and disciplinary procedures are produced by organizations institutionally linked together, such as the school, the prison, and the factory.

However, the minor variations already contained in this last point indicate a difference between Adorno and Foucault that proves to be significant if we consider the list of similarities once more. To be

sure, both authors obviously ignore the fact that in normal cases social groups support or endure the process of maintaining relations of social power through their normative convictions and cultural orientations — thus, to put it sharply, they participate in the exercise of domination. Adorno and Foucault, therefore, both place a coercive model of societal order at the basis of their social theory. But Foucault, when he attempts to analyze the means of social coercion that correspond to this basic idea, is satisfied with a conception of technique that works solely on the human body, since he regards the psychic properties of subjects, and thus their personality structures, entirely as products of specific types of corporal disciplining. Because of his structuralist beginnings, Foucault, as soon as he gives his theory of power the form of historical investigations, portrays subjects behavioristically, as formless, conditionable creatures. Adorno represents this process differently. He attributes such contemporary importance to manipulative strategies because he regards it as one of the characteristics of the postliberal era of capitalism that subjects have lost the psychic strength for practical autonomy. The techniques of manipulation are able to have disposal over individuals as well as over objectified natural processes only because subjects are beginning to lose those ego capacities that were acquired in the course of the history of civilization at the expense of aesthetic capacities. What Foucault in his theory of power appears ontologically to presuppose — the conditionability of subjects — Adorno grasps as the historical product of a process of civilization that goes back to the early stages of human history.

The critical spirit of a philosophy of history that interprets the triumphal march of instrumental reason as a process of human self-denial is distinguished in this regard from the objectivistic spirit of a systems theory that views the history of society solely as a process of the augmentation of social power. Of course, Adorno and Foucault may agree in the diagnosis of a process of technical rationalization of the means of social domination, but the theories that respectively permit them to reach this common result are basically different. Adorno's philosophy of history attempts to trace the intrapsychic and societal consequences that result from the historical step of an instrumental disposition toward natural processes. It is in the position to make this claim because it takes as its basis an — admittedly un-

convincing — concept of the domination of nature in which the intrapsychic processes of personality formation are regarded as complementary to the practical activity of labor. However, as a result, for Adorno the growth of capacities for administrative control is only one of three dimensions in which the process of civilization initiated by the original act of the domination of nature moves. Societal production, social domination, and the formation of individual personality are simultaneously included in this — the inexorable triumphal march of instrumental reason is reflected in the changes in the organization of social power and in the psychic properties of the subject. By contrast, the theory on the basis of which Foucault views the process of civilization in his historical investigations is directed solely to the second of these three dimensions. He portrays the history of societies solely as a systemic process of the increase of the capacity for administrative steering.

In addition, Foucault and Adorno arrive at the theoretical assumptions of their historical analyses in completely different ways. The basic model with which Foucault analyzes the process of the technical perfecting of the means of social domination is not that of the mastery of nature but rather that of strategic rationality. He assumes that societies are compelled toward the formation and development of strategic means of social control because the requirements of steering are steadily raised as a result of population growth and the corresponding development of productive forces. In his historical writings, Foucault's approach is reduced to this systems-theoretic version of a theory of social power because he is not able to grasp the social solely as a field of strategic conflicts. The manner in which the formation of complex structures of power, relations of social domination, might come about could not be explained on the exclusive basis of a concept of social struggle. Foucault does not abandon an account of the difficulties thereby raised for his argument; rather, he simply dissolves them when in his analysis of the peculiarity of modern techniques of power he suddenly puts the image of social force in the position held by strategic action. This coercive model of social order, in which the original concept of the social as a field of social struggle is transformed into the concept of a network of disciplinary social institutions, takes on a systems-theoretic form in Foucault's historical studies. In this form a single dimension is cut out of that process of

civilization, already described in a one-sided manner by Adorno's philosophy of history, and is conceived functionalistically as the augmentation of social power. Thus, given the presuppositions with which Foucault operates, it is no longer a question of the complementary process of a gradual human self-alienation as found in Adorno's philosophy of history. To that extent, in the form of historical investigations, his theory of power represents a systems-theoretic solution to the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. In its positivistic indifference, the historical process, which for Adorno took the form of a critique enveloped in resignation, becomes the objective event of the augmentation of social power.

Admittedly, neither Adorno's critical theory nor its systems-theoretic continuation in Foucault's theory of power yields the appropriate tools for analyzing the forms of integration in late-capitalist societies. What is required for that is a consistent working out of those dimensions of social action so far only indirectly and vaguely encountered in Horkheimer's early work, namely that of "culture" and that of "social struggle." By contrast, Jürgen Habermas's social theory offers the best chance for a substantive development of these concepts. In his attempt at a communication-theoretic transformation of critical theory, he has made the dimension of social interaction the center of his approach. Habermas initially developed his theory by way of a critique of positivism based on an anthropology of knowledge. The first phase of his theoretical work is determined by the goal of tracing the different types of scientific knowledge back to prescientific interests of the species so that critical social theory might be justified as an element of the societal life-process.

Habermas extends the communication-theoretic insights of his critique of positivism into the basic assumptions of a social theory in which he attempts to establish a primacy for processes of social interaction in the formation of the species and thus for social evolution. In this second phase of his work Habermas presents mutual understanding [*Verständigung*] as the paradigm of the social. Yet he locates the basic ideas of social theory that result from this within two competing versions of the history of the species. Two different versions of social theory from within the perspective of a theory of communication follow from this. Habermas develops further only the first conception, one oriented to systems theory. In the 1970s his social

theory was worked out, in several stages, from the approach initially developed in his critique of the technocracy thesis. This developmental process, in which the traces of an alternative model of society gradually disappear, is finally formulated in *The Theory of Communicative Action.*

Notes

1. See M. Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy and History," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice,* ed. Donald Bouchard (Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 140.

2. Ibid., p. 151.

3. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison,* trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon, 1978), p. 305.

4. In what follows I have made use in a few places of some of the formulations used in the chapter on Foucault in A. Honneth and H. Joas, *Social Action and Human Nature,* trans. R. Meyer (Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 129ff.

5. *Discipline and Punish,* p. 40.

6. Ibid., p. 48.

7. Ibid., pp. 53–54.

8. Ibid., p. 87–88.

9. This type of functionalist analysis is found in the methodology employed by George Rusche and Otto Kirchheimer in *Punishment and Social Structures* [1939] (Russell and Russell, 1968).

10. *Discipline and Punish,* pp. 77 and 86.

11. Ibid., p. 80. Of course, Foucault speaks in many places of an all-encompassing process of the augmentation of social power.

12. However, see the socio-historical objections of Heinz Steinert, "Ist es denn aber auch wahr, Herr F.? *Überwachen und Strafen* unter der Fiktion gelesen, es handelt sich dabei um eine sozialgeschichtliche Darstellung," *Kriminalsoziologische Bibliographie* 19/20 (1978), p. 30ff.

13. *Discipline and Punish,* p. 120.

14. Ibid., pp. 138–139.

15. Ibid., p. 141.

16. Alfred Krovoza's *Produktion und Sozialisation* (Frankfurt, 1976) more or less tends toward such a problematic narrowing of the historical perspective.

17. *Discipline and Punish,* p. 170.

18. Ibid., p. 184.

19. Ibid., p. 193 (translation modified).

20. See the impressive examples of the creation of "administrative biographies" by the police in Aaron V. Cicourel's book *The Social Organization of Juvenile Justice* (London, 1976).

21. *Discipline and Punish,* p. 29.

22. E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (Free Press, 1967), book 3, chapter 8.

23. *Discipline and Punish,* p. 224.

24. Ibid., p. 218.

25. Ibid., pp. 218–219.

26. Ibid., p. 218.

27. See also *The History of Sexuality,* volume 1, p. 106ff.

28. *Discipline and Punish,* p. 232.

29. Ibid., pp. 227–228.

30. See the persuasive objections by A. Giddens, *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* (University of California Press, 1981), p. 171ff.

31. *Discipline and Punish,* p. 222.

32. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* trans. John Cumming (New York: Continuum Publishing Co., 1982).

9

Michel Foucault: A "Young Conservative"?

Nancy Fraser

In a recent discussion of postmodernism, Jürgen Habermas referred to Michel Foucault as a "Young Conservative."[1] This epithet was an allusion to the "conservative revolutionaries" of interwar Weimar Germany, a group of radical, antimodernist intellectuals whose numbers included Martin Heidegger, Ernst Jünger, Carl Schmitt, and Hans Freyer. To call Foucault a "Young Conservative," then, was to accuse him of elaborating what Habermas calls a "total critique of modernity." Such a critique, according to Habermas, is both theoretically paradoxical and politically suspect. It is theoretically paradoxical because it cannot help but surreptitiously presuppose some of the very modern categories and attitudes it claims to have surpassed. And it is politically suspect because it aims less at a dialectical resolution of the problems of modern societies than at a radical rejection of modernity as such. In sum, it is Habermas's contention that although Foucault's critique of contemporary culture and society purports to be postmodern, it is at best modern and at worst antimodern.[2]

As Habermas sees it, then, the issue between him and Foucault concerns their respective stances vis-à-vis modernity. Habermas locates his own stance in the tradition of dialectical social criticism that runs from Marx to the Frankfurt school. This tradition analyzes modernization as a two-sided historical process and insists that although Enlightenment rationality dissolved premodern forms of domination and unfreedom, it gave rise to new and insidious forms of its own. The important thing about this tradition, from Habermas's point of

view, and the thing that sets it apart from the rival tradition in which he locates Foucault is that it does not reject in toto the modern ideals and aspirations whose two-sided actualization it criticizes. Instead, it seeks to preserve and extend both the "emancipatory impulse" behind the Enlightenment and that movement's real success in overcoming premodern forms of domination — even while it criticizes the bad features of modern societies.

This, however, claims Habermas, is not the stance of Foucault. Foucault belongs rather to a tradition of rejectionist criticism of modernity, one which includes Nietzsche, Heidegger, and the French poststructuralists. These writers, unlike the dialecticians with whom Habermas identifies, aspire to a total break with the Enlightenment. In their zeal to be as radical as possible, they "totalize" critique so that it turns against itself. Not content to criticize the contradiction between modern norm and modern reality, they criticize even the constitutive norms of modernity, rejecting the very commitments to truth, rationality, and freedom that alone make critique possible.

What are we to make of this highly charged attack on the most political of the French poststructuralists by the leading exponent of German Critical Theory?

On the one hand, Habermas's criticism of Foucault directs our attention to some very important questions: Where does Foucault stand vis-à-vis the political ideals of the Enlightenment? Does he reject the project of examining the background practices and institutions that structure the possibilities of social life in order to bring them under the conscious, collective control of human beings? Does he reject the conception of freedom as autonomy that that project appears to presuppose? Does he aspire to a total break with the long-standing Western tradition of emancipation via rational reflection?

But, on the other hand, even as Habermas's criticism directs our attention to such questions, it tends not to solicit the sort of inquiry that is needed to answer them. In fact, Habermas's formulation is too tendentious to permit a fair adjudication of the issues. It overlooks the possibility that the target of Foucault's critique may not be modernity *simpliciter* but, rather, only one particular component of it: namely, a system of practice and discourse that Foucault calls "humanism." Moreover, it begs an important question by assuming that one cannot reject humanism without also rejecting modernity.

Finally, it jumps the gun with the alarmist supposition that if Foucault rejects a "universalistic" or foundationalistic metainterpretation of humanist concepts and values, then he must be rejecting these concepts and values entirely.

All told, then, Habermas raises the ante too precipitously and forecloses the possibility of posing to Foucault a more nuanced and analytically precise set of questions: Assuming that Foucault's target is indeed "humanism," then what exactly is it, and what is its relation to modernity more broadly conceived? Does Foucault really mean to reject humanism, and if so, then on what grounds? Does he reject it, for example, on strictly conceptual and philosophical grounds? Is the problem that the humanist vocabulary is still mired in a superseded Cartesian metaphysic? Or, rather, does Foucault reject humanism on strategic grounds? In other words, does he contend that though a humanist political stance may once have had emancipatory force when it was a matter of opposing the premodern forms of domination of the ancien régime, this is no longer the case? Does he thus think, strategically, that appeals to humanist values in the present conjuncture must fail to discourage — indeed, must promote — new, quintessentially modern forms of domination? Or, finally, does Foucault reject humanism on normative grounds? Does he hold that the humanist project is intrinsically undesirable? Is humanism, in his view, simply a formula for domination *tout court*?

If Habermas is to be faulted for failing to ask such questions, then Foucault must be faulted for failing to answer them. In fact, his position is highly ambiguous: on the one hand, he never directly pronounces in favor of rejectionism as an alternative to dialectical social criticism; but, on the other hand, his writings abound with rhetorical devices that convey rejectionist attitudes. Moreover, given his general reluctance to spell out the theoretical presuppositions informing his work, it is not surprising that Foucault fails to distinguish among the various sorts of rejectionism I have just outlined. On the contrary, he tends to conflate conceptual, strategic, and normative arguments against humanism.

These ambiguities have given rise to an interesting divergence among Foucault's interpreters, one that bears directly on the controversy sparked by Habermas. Because Foucault's texts contain stretches of philosophical, historical, and political reasoning that are

susceptible to various rejectionist interpretations and because the conceptual, strategic, and normative dimensions of these are not adequately distinguished, interpreters have tended to seize on one or another of these elements as the key to the whole. David Hoy, for example, has interpreted Foucault as, in my terms, a merely conceptual or philosophical rejectionist of humanism;[3] other readers have taken or are likely to take him to be, again in my terms, a merely strategic rejectionist of humanism; and Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow have put the strongest construction of all on Foucault, reading him as, in my terms, a substantive, normative rejectionist of humanist values.[4] These, I believe, are the major, prototypical interpretations of Foucault now extant. Only by closely examining them can we hope to get to the bottom of the "Young Conservative" controversy.

In what follows, I shall consider each of these three interpretations of Foucault. I shall not be directly concerned, however, with the question, Who has got Foucault right? I believe that Foucault does not really have a single consistent position and that there is some textual evidence in favor of each reading; moreover, I do not wish here to debate where I think the balance of such evidence lies. My primary concern will be the substantive issues between Foucault and Habermas. I shall try to formulate these issues more precisely and persuasively than I think Habermas has done and to begin adjudicating them. My focus, then, will be the following problem: Which, if any, of the various sorts of rejectionism that can be attributed to Foucault are desirable and defensible alternatives to the sort of dialectical social criticism Habermas envisions?

1

One influential reading of Foucault is premised on the assumption that — *pace* Habermas — to reject a foundationalistic or universalistic metaphilosophical interpretation of the humanist ideals of modernity is not necessarily to reject modernity altogether. In this reading, a version of which has been expounded by David Hoy, Foucault is a merely philosophical rejectionist: he rejects only a certain philosophical framework, not necessarily the values and forms of life that that framework has served to underpin and legitimate.[5] Furthermore, this

reading holds that such a position is defensible; Foucault is perfectly consistent in repudiating the Cartesian vocabulary in which humanist ideals have been articulated while retaining something like the substance of the ideals themselves.

Those who read Foucault in this way follow Dreyfus and Rabinow in seeing him as a Heideggerian of sorts, allegedly completing and concretizing Heidegger's program for the dismantling of Cartesianism.[6] Heidegger argued that the subject and object that modern philosophy (including political philosophy) took for necessary, universal, and ahistorical fundaments were actually contingent, historically situated products of the modern interpretation of the meaning of Being.[7] As such, they pertained only to one "epoch" in the "history of Being" (i.e., Western civilization), an epoch that had exhausted its possibilities and was ending. That these Cartesian interpretations of Being were contingent and derivative was evident in view of their relativity to and dependence on a prior, enabling background that remained necessarily "unthought" by them. For a variety of logical, historical, and quasi-political reasons, Heidegger thought that this background could be evoked only indirectly and metaphorically via words like *Lichtung* (clearing).

Foucault is seen, accordingly, as continuing and concretizing Heidegger's delimitation of Cartesianism by spelling out what Heidegger might have or should have meant by the background, or *Lichtung*. The background is the historically specific system of norm-governed social practices (at first called the "episteme," later the "power/knowledge regime") that defines and produces each epoch's distinctive subjects and objects of knowledge and power. A new kind of historiography (first called "archaeology," later "genealogy") can chart the emergence and disappearance of such systems of practice and describe their specific functioning. Such historiography can illuminate the transitory character of any given episteme or power/knowledge regime, including, and especially, the modern humanist one. It can function as a kind of *Kulturkritik,* dereifying contemporary practices and objects, robbing them of their traditional ahistorical, foundationalistic legitimations, lending them an appearance of arbitrariness and even nastiness, and suggesting their potential openness to change. It can demonstrate, for example, that the Cartesian concepts of subjectivity and objectivity that have served to legitimate

humanist values are "fictions" and that these fictions and the values correlated with them have in turn served to legitimate practices that, denuded of their aura of legitimacy, take on an unsavory appearance.

In this reading, Foucault follows Heidegger in singling out a constellation both call "humanism" as a target for genealogical critique and delimitation. Heidegger argued that in the development of modern Western culture since Descartes, a complex and disastrous complicity has been elaborated between the subjectivity and the objectivity that humanism simplistically opposes to each other.[8] On the one hand, modern mathematical science and machine technology have objectified everything that is (the first taking as real only what can be fitted into a preestablished research ground plan; the second treating everything as "standing reserve," or resources to be mobilized within a technological grid). But on the other hand, and at the same time, the "age of anthropology" has created a realm of subjectivities; it has given rise to such entities as "representations," "values," "cultural expressions," "life objectivations," "aesthetic and religious experience," the mind that thinks the research plan and its objects, and the will that wills the mobilization of standing reserve. This objectification and this subjectification, says Heidegger, are two sides of the same coin. Humanists are at best naive and at worst complicit in thinking they can solve the problems of modern culture by asserting the dominance of the subject side over the object side. Ontologically, the two are exactly on the same (non-"primordial" and "forgetful") level; ethically — the very notion of ethics is part of the problem. But, says Heidegger, none of this is meant to sponsor the glorification of the inhumane; it is aimed, rather, at finding a higher sense of the dignity of "man" than that envisioned by humanism.[9]

Those who emphasize Heidegger's influence stress Foucault's account of the modern discursive formation of humanism. Humanism, claims Foucault, is a political and scientific praxis oriented to a distinctive object known as "Man."[10] Man came into existence only in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, with the emergence of a new power/knowledge regime. Within and by means of the social practices that regime comprises, Man was and is constituted as the epistemic object of the new "human sciences" and also instituted as the subject who is the target and instrument of a new kind of nor-

malizing power. Both as epistemic object and as subject of power, Man is a strange, unstable, two-sided entity, or "doublet." He consists in an impossible symbiosis of two opposing poles, one objective, the other subjective. Each of these poles seeks to exclude the other but, in so doing, manages only to solicit and enhance it, since each in fact requires the other. Humanism, then, is the contradictory, ceaseless, self-defeating project of resolving this Man problem.

In *The Order of Things,* Foucault provides a grid for the varieties of modern humanism by identifying three forms of the Man doublet. First, there is the transcendental/empirical double, in which Man both constitutes the world of empirical objects and is constituted himself, an empirical object like any other in the world. Second, there is the cogito/unthought double, in which Man is both determined by forces unknown to him and aware that he is so determined; he is thus charged with the task of thinking his own unthought and thereby freeing himself. Finally, there is the return-and-retreat-of-the-origin double, in which Man is both the originary opening from which history unfolds and an object with a history that antedates him.

Each of these three doubles contains a subject pole that suggests the autonomy, rationality, and infinite value of Man. As the one who transcendentally constitutes the world, Man is a meaning giver and lawmaker. As thinker of his own unthought, he becomes self-transparent, unalienated, and free. And as enabling horizon of history, he is its measure and destiny. But no sooner does this subject pole endow Man with this privilege and value than it defines the opposing object pole that denies them. As empirical object, Man is subject to prediction and control. Unknown to himself, he is determined by alien forces. And as a being with a history that antedates him, he is encumbered with a density not properly his own.

The humanist political project, then, is that of solving the Man problem. It is the project of making the subject pole triumph over the object pole, of achieving autonomy by mastering the other in history, in society, in oneself, of making substance into subject. Foucault's claim, both in *The Order of Things* and throughout his subsequent writings, is that this project, premised as it is on the "subjected sovereignty" of Man, is self-defeating, self-contradictory, and can lead in practice only to domination. Only a completely new configuration — a posthumanist one that no longer produces this bizarre Man

doublet but, rather, some completely different object — offers a way out.

The reading of Foucault as a merely philosophical rejectionist takes the writings after *The Order of Things* as working out the social implications of the philosophical critique of humanism. *Discipline and Punish* is seen as chronicling the fabrication of the object side of Man; the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* and shorter pieces like "Truth and Subjectivity" chronicle the fabrication of the subject side.[11] Whereas a humanist might be expected to criticize the objectification of Man in the name of subjectivity, Foucault's work on sexuality putatively shows that subjectivity is every bit as problematic as objectivity. Indeed, the complicity and symmetry of the two poles is dramatically revealed in two other works, *Pierre Rivière* and *Herculine Barbin.*[12] In each of these books, Foucault juxtaposes the first-person subjective discourse of an individual (in the first, a nineteenth-century French parricide; in the second, a nineteenth-century French hermaphrodite) to the contemporary objective medical and legal discourses about him or her. Although he never explicitly clarified his intentions in these books, it seems safe to assume that Foucault's aim is not the humanist one of vindicating the subjective discourse over against the objective one. On the contrary, it must be the anti-humanist aim of placing the two on a par, of showing that they depend on and require each other, that they are generated together within, and are illustrative of, the discursive formation of modern humanism.

When Foucault's works are read in this way, it is possible to treat his rejection of humanism as merely conceptual or philosophical. Just as Heidegger's delimitation of humanism was intended to enhance rather than to undermine human dignity, so Foucault's critique, *pace* Habermas, is not an attack on the notions of freedom and reason per se. It is rather a rejection of one contingent, superseded philosophical idiom or discursive formation in which those values have lately found their expression. What is novel and important in Foucault's social criticism, in this reading, is not its implied normative content — *that*, for all practical purposes, is "humanistic" in some looser sense. The novelty is rather the scrapping of the classical modern philosophical underpinnings of that content. Foucault has succeeded in producing a species of *Kulturkritik* that does not rely

on — indeed, that explicitly repudiates — the subject-object framework in all of its familiar guises. He rejects the notion of progress — not only in its self-congratulatory Whiggish form but also in the more critical and sophisticated form in which it appears in Marxism and some versions of German Critical Theory. Thus, he produces genuine indictments of objectionable aspects of modern culture without presupposing a Hegelian teleology and a unitary subject of history. Similarly, he rejects the distinction between "real" and "administered" needs or interests, where the former are presumed to be grounded in something more than a contingent, historical power/knowledge regime or background of social practices. He is able, consequently, to condemn objectionable practices without presupposing the notion of autonomous subjectivity. Thus, David Hoy treats Foucault's explicitly political works — *Discipline and Punish* and the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* — as demonstrations of the dispensability of these anachronistic and questionable notions.[13] Foucault has shown that one does not need humanism in order to criticize prisons, social science, pseudoprograms for sexual liberation, and the like; that humanism is not the last word in critical social and historical writing; that there is life — and critique — after Cartesianism. One need not fear that in giving up the paradoxical and aporetic subject-object framework, one is giving up also and necessarily the possibility of engaged political reflection.

This reading of Foucault as a merely philosophical rejectionist is attractive. It suggests the possibility of combining something like Heidegger's and Foucault's postmodernism in philosophy with something like Habermas's modernism in politics. It thereby holds out the appealing promise that one can have one's cake and eat it, too. One gives up the foundationalistic metainterpretation of humanist values: the view that such values are grounded in the nature of something (Man, the subject) independent of, and more enduring than, historically changing regimes of social practices. One gives up as well the idiom in which humanist values have had their classical modern expression: the terms 'autonomy,' 'subjectivity', and 'self-determination' lose their privilege. But one does not give up the substantial critical core of humanism. What Habermas would call its "emancipatory force" remains. One simply uses other rhetorical devices and strategies to do essentially the same critical work that the humanist

tried to do — namely, to identify and condemn those forms of modern discourse and practice that, under the guise of promoting freedom, extend domination.

Aside from the question of the fidelity of this reading, is the project it attributes to Foucault a defensible and desirable one? I take it that a merely philosophical rejection of humanism is defensible and desirable in principle. It is very much on the current political-philosophical agenda, as can be seen from a wide variety of recent work: for example, analytic accounts of the concept of autonomy by John Rawls and Gerald Dworkin;[14] antifoundationalist reconstructions of liberalism by Richard Rorty and Michael Walzer;[15] antihumanist versions of Marxism inspired by Louis Althusser;[16] and deconstructive reconceptualizations of "the political" by French philosophers influenced by Derrida.[17] Even portions of Habermas's work can be seen as a (moderate) version of this project: his "communicative" reconstruction of Kantian ethics, for example, is an attempt to divest the humanist notion of autonomy of some of its Cartesian trappings (its "monologism" and its ahistorical formalism) while preserving its efficacy as an instrument of social criticism; his distinction between evolution and history is an attempt to disencumber humanism of the Hegelian presupposition of a metaconstitutive subject of history; and his "linguistic turn" is an attempt to detach humanism from the standpoint of the philosophy of consciousness.

But to endorse in principle the general program of de-Cartesianizing and de-Hegelianizing humanism is not yet to resolve a great many very important and difficult problems. It is only to begin to spell out the tasks and standards in terms of which a Foucauldian merely philosophical rejection of humanism is to be evaluated. Among these tasks and standards, I believe, is the adequacy of what Foucault has to say in response to the following sort of metaethical question: Supposing one abandons a foundationalist grounding of humanist values, then to what sort of nonfoundationalist justification can such values lay claim? This, however, is a question Foucault has never squarely faced; rather, he has tried to displace it by insinuating that values neither can have nor require any justification. And yet he has not provided compelling reasons for embracing that extreme metaethical position.

This puts Foucault in the paradoxical position of being unable to account for or justify the sorts of normative political judgments he makes all the time — for example, that "discipline" is a bad thing. Moreover, it raises the question as to whether the values implicit in his unabashedly value-laden descriptions of social reality would, if rendered explicit, constitute a coherent and consistent first-order normative outlook. That question is especially pressing, since Foucault has never, despite repeated insinuations, successfully argued that a coherent first-order normative outlook is dispensable in social criticism.

But the problems that arise when we read Foucault as propounding a merely philosophical rejection of humanism run still deeper. Even if we absolve him of the onus of producing an acceptable moral theory, we may still question whether he has produced a satisfactory nonhumanist political rhetoric, one that does indeed do, and do better, the critical work that humanist rhetoric sought to do. We may question, for example, whether Foucault's rhetoric really does the job of distinguishing better from worse regimes of social practices; whether it really does the job of identifying forms of domination (or whether it overlooks some and/or misrecognizes others); whether it really does the job of distinguishing fruitful from unfruitful, acceptable from unacceptable forms of resistance to domination; and finally, whether it really does the job of suggesting not simply that change is possible but also what sort of change is desirable. These, I take it, are among the principal tasks of social criticism, and they are tasks with respect to which Foucault's social criticism might well be judged deficient.

It is worth recalling that the reading of Foucault as a merely philosophical rejectionist of humanism included the claim that he had succeeded in producing a species of *Kulturkritik* without relying on Cartesian underpinnings. But that claim now seems open to question. We should conclude, then, that however laudable the general project, Foucault's version of merely philosophical rejectionism, or the version that has been attributed to him by readers like David Hoy, is incomplete and hence unsatisfactory. It tends, as a result, to invite the assumption that in Foucault's work one is dealing with a rejectionism of a stronger sort.

2

A second reading of Foucault holds that in addition to rejecting humanism on philosophical grounds, he also rejects it on strategic grounds. This reading offers a correspondent understanding of Foucault's position: it contends that he sees humanism as a political rhetoric and practice that developed at the beginning of the modern era in order to oppose what were essentially premodern forms of domination and oppression. Its targets were things like monarchical absolutism, the use of torture to extort confessions from criminals, and spectacular, cruel public executions. In opposition to such practices, humanism sought to limit assaults on people's bodies; it proclaimed a new respect for inwardness, personhood, humanity, and rights. However, the result was not the abolition of domination but, rather, the replacement of premodern forms of domination with new, quintessentially modern ones. The new concern for "humaneness" fed into the development of a powerful battery of social science technologies that massively transformed and vastly extended the scope and penetration of social control. The astonishing growth and near-ubiquitous spread of these techniques amounted to a revolution in the very nature of power in modern culture. The operation of power was so thoroughly transformed as to render humanism irrelevant and *dépassé*. The democratic safeguards forged in the struggle against premodern despotism have no force against the new modes of domination. Talk of rights and the inviolability of the person is of no use when the enemy is not the despot but the psychiatric social worker. Indeed, such talk and associated reform practice only make things worse. Humanism, then, must be rejected on strategic as well as philosophical grounds. In the current situation, it is devoid of emancipatory force.

This reading gives great weight to the argument of *Discipline and Punish*. There, Foucault chronicles the emergence of the "norm" and its replacement of the "law" as the primary instrument of modern social control. This change came about, he claims, as a result of the development of a new power/knowledge regime that produced a new subject and object of knowledge and a new target of power, namely, Man. Whereas an earlier regime had produced a knowledge of overt actions (crimes or sins) and a power whose target was bodies,

the new regime sought to know and to discipline character, or the "soul." This new power/knowledge object was a deeper one: it was the sensibility or personality that underlay overt actions, the self or set of dispositions that was the ground or cause of those actions. Its very temporality was different; it persisted well beyond the more ephemeral actions that were its mere outward expressions. Hence, the knowledge of this object had a fundamentally different structure, and the production of such knowledge employed fundamentally different techniques. Along with Man, the "human sciences" were born. These sciences investigated the laws governing the formation, perseverance, and alteration of sensibility. They produced character typologies and classifications of "souls." They constituted individuals as "cases" and treated their overt actions as manifest signs of latent realities. Such signs had to be deciphered so that the particular "nature" of the individual in question could be determined — then his or her acts could be explained by that nature. Furthermore, once the laws governing a particular nature were known, prescriptions for altering it could be devised. Selves could be reprogrammed, old habits dismantled, and new ones inculcated in their place. Moreover, individualizing knowledges were complemented by synoptical ones. Statistical methods for surveying and assessing masses of population were developed. Statistical norms were formulated that made it possible to locate individuals on a commensurating scale. From the standpoint of social control, the relevant categories ceased to be the old-fashioned juridical ones of guilt and innocence. Instead, they became the social science ones of normalcy and deviancy. Henceforth, the world came to be populated less by malefactors than by "deviants," "perverts," and "delinquents."

Discipline and Punish thus describes the emergence and character of a new, distinctively modern form of power: normalizing-disciplinary power. It is the sort of power more appropriate to the bureaucratic welfare state than to the despotic regimes opposed by humanism. It is a power that operates quietly and unspectacularly but, for all that, continuously, penetratingly, and ubiquitously. It has no easily identifiable center but is "capillary," dispersed throughout the entire social body. Its characteristic agents are social scientists, expert witnesses, social workers, psychiatrists, teachers, progressive

penologists, and the lay citizen who internalizes its categories and values. Above all, it is a power against which humanism is defenseless.

The reading of Foucault now under consideration takes him, then, to be rejecting humanism on strategic as well as on philosophical grounds. He is arguing, it is claimed, that the notions of subjectivity, autonomy, and selfhood to which the humanist appeals are in fact integral components of the disciplinary regime. Far from being genuinely critical, oppositional ideals with emancipatory force, they are actually the very norms and objects through which discipline operates. Selves and subjects in the proper sense came into existence only when the modern power/knowledge regime did. The humanist critic who appeals to them is thus not in a position to oppose that regime effectively. On the contrary, she or he is trapped in the doubling movement that defines the "age of Man."

Is this view defensible? The argument of *Discipline and Punish* consists in one extended historical example: the eighteenth-century European penal reform movement. This movement sought to end the ancien régime's practice of torturing bodies and to replace it with a penal practice aimed at the criminal's mind. It would reorder the offender's mental representations in order to provoke self-reflection and enlightenment, thus rehabilitating the malefactor as an agent and subject. But, claims Foucault, humanist reform never materialized; it was immediately transformed into a normalizing, disciplinary mode of punishment in which the criminal was made the object of a technology of causal reconditioning.

There are obvious logical reasons to doubt that this argument establishes that humanism should be rejected on strategic grounds. It extrapolates from one case, over a hundred years old, to the general conclusion that the humanist conception of freedom as autonomy is today without critical force with respect to disciplinary institutions.

Moreover, a closer look at this case reveals an important new wrinkle. Foucault's account implies that the humanist penal reform movement contained a significant ambiguity. It was unclear whether the new object of punishment, the criminal's "mind" or "humanity," meant the capacity to choose rationally and freely (roughly, the capacities attributed by Kant to the noumenal self) or the causally conditioned seat or container of representations (roughly, the self

posited by associationist psychology with the properties attributed by Kant to the empirical self). The result was that it was unclear whether the project of restoring the juridical subject meant provoking a process of *self*-reflection whereby the criminal would undergo *self*-change, a project that would require adopting vis-à-vis the criminal what Habermas calls "the stance of communicative interaction" (or dialogic persuasion), or whether it meant redoing the association of ideas via cognitive conditioning, a project that would mean adopting what Habermas calls "the stance of strategic action" (or technological control). Foucault's account suggests that the penal reform movement conflated these two objects and their corresponding projects and action orientations and so, in effect, contained within itself the seeds of discipline. It posited, at least in embryo, objectified, predictable, and manipulable Man, thus effectively opening the door to the behavioral engineers and welfare technologists.

But if this is so, then what the argument of *Discipline and Punish* discredits is not a proper humanism at all but, rather, some hybrid form resembling utilitarianism. (Nor should this surprise, given that the archvillain of the book is Jeremy Bentham, inventor of the Panopticon.) Thus, it does not follow that a nonutilitarian, Kantian, or quasi-Kantian humanism lacks critical force against the psychological conditioning and mind manipulation that are the real targets of Foucault's critique of disciplinary power. Recall that Habermas has devised a version of Kantian humanism that goes at least some of the way toward meeting the philosophical objections considered in the previous section of this essay.[18] He has elaborated a pragmatic reinterpretation of Kant's ethics, one that divorces the autonomy-heteronomy contrast from the vestiges of the foundational subject-object ontology it retained in Kant and that pegs it instead to the pragmatic distinction between communicative interaction and strategic action. This move strengthens the normative, critical force of the autonomy notion against discipline. It effectively condemns strategic action irrespective of whether the object of punishment be a body or a "soul" or a "self."

It seems plausible to me to follow this Habermassian line and still allow that Foucault is right to contend that in the context of punishment the outcome of Enlightenment penal reform was not merely contingent. It does indeed seem doubtful that the project of reaching

agreement with a criminal, of positing her or him as an autonomous subject of conversation, could ever in fact be anything other than manipulation and control of linguistic behavior, given that *ex hypothesi* it is to be carried out in the quintessentially non-"ideal speech situation" of involuntary incarceration. The same may also hold for women in the bourgeois patriarchal family, students in institutions of compulsory education, patients in mental asylums, soldiers in the military — indeed, for all situations where the power that structures discourse is hierarchical and asymmetrical and where some persons are prevented from pressing their claims either by overt or covert force or by such structural features as the lack of an appropriate vocabulary for interpreting their needs.

But the fact that the humanist ideal of autonomous subjectivity is unrealizable, even co-optable, in such "disciplinary" contexts need not be seen as an argument against that ideal. It may be seen, rather, as an argument against hierarchical, asymmetrical power. One need not conclude, with Foucault, that humanist ideals must be rejected on strategic grounds. One may conclude instead, with Habermas, that it is a precondition for the realization of those ideals that the "power" that structures discourse be symmetrical, nonhierarchical, and hence reciprocal. Indeed, one may reinterpret the notion of autonomy so as to incorporate this insight, as Habermas has done. For him, autonomy ceases to refer to a "monologic" process of will formation wherein an isolated individual excludes all empirical needs, desires, and motives and considers only what is required by pure formal reason. Autonomy refers rather to an ideal "dialogic" process wherein individuals with equal right and power to question prevailing norms seek consensus through conversation about which of their apparently individual empirical needs and interests are in fact generalizable. In this interpretation, the cases of disciplinary domination described by Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* are instances not of autonomy but of heteronomy precisely because they involve modes of discourse production that do not meet the procedural requirements specified by the "ideal speech situation."

Furthermore, it is worth noting that any strategic argument against humanism depends on complex empirical considerations. The anti-humanist must demonstrate that the actual character of the contemporary world really is such as to render humanism irrelevant and

dépassé. She or he must show, for example, that it really is the modern bureaucratic welfare state and not other forms of repression or oppression that constitutes the chief threat to freedom in our era. For even a "utilitarian-humanist" can argue that, with all of its problems, the "carceral" society described in *Discipline and Punish* is better than the dictatorship of the party-state, junta, or Imam; that, *pace* Foucault, the reformed prison is preferable to the gulag, the South African or Salvadoran torture cell, and Islamic "justice"; and that in *this* world — which is the real world — humanism still wields its share of critical, emancipatory punch.

Moreover, for nonutilitarian humanists like Habermas, the continuing strategic relevance of humanism is broader still. It is not confined to the critique of premodern forms of domination but applies equally to more modern "disciplinary" forms of power.

3

There is yet another way of reading Foucault that remains to be considered. This way takes him to be rejecting humanism not simply on conceptual and/or strategic grounds but, rather, on substantive normative grounds. It holds that Foucault believes that humanism is intrinsically undesirable, that the conception of freedom as autonomy is a formula for domination *tout court*. Furthermore, some exponents of this line of interpretation, such as Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, claim that Foucault is right to reject humanism on normative grounds.[19]

This reading is or ought to be the real target of Habermas's attack, for it denies that his pragmatic, dialogic reconceptualization of autonomy meets Foucault's objections. Habermas's point would have weight, it is claimed, if Foucault were merely arguing that discipline is the use of social science in utilitarian programs aimed at normalizing deviancy in contexts of asymmetrical or hierarchical power and that humanism is inefficacious against it. In fact, however, he is arguing a much stronger thesis. Foucault is claiming that even a perfectly realized autonomous subjectivity would be a form of normalizing, disciplinary domination.

This reading depends heavily on Foucault's more recent work: the first volume of his *History of Sexuality* and the lecture "Truth and

Subjectivity," which previews the direction pursued in the subsequent volumes of the *History*.[20] These texts are seen as doing for the subject side of the Man doublet what *Discipline and Punish* did for the object side. They provide a genealogical account of the fabrication of the hermeneutical subject, a subject that is not the empirical, causally conditioned container of representations but, rather, the putatively free, quasi-noumenal subject of communicative interaction. Foucault demonstrates, it is claimed, that far from providing a standpoint for emancipation, the fabrication of this subject only seals Man's domination. The subjectification of Man is in reality his subjection.

This reading correctly notes that Foucault's later work focuses on a host of subjectifying practices. Central among these are those quintessentially humanist forms of discourse that aim at liberation and self-mastery via the thematization and critique of previously unthematized, uncriticized contents of the self: unarticulated desires, thoughts, wishes, and needs. Foucault seeks the origins of the notion that by hermeneutical decipherment of the deep, hidden meaning of such contents, one can achieve lucidity about the other in oneself and thus master it and become free. He traces the career of this notion from its beginnings in Stoic self-examination and early Christian penance to its modern variants in psychoanalysis and the allegedly pseudoradical politics of sexual liberation. Foucault aims to show that "truth is not naturally free," that it took centuries of coercion and intimidation to "breed a confessing animal."[21]

Certainly, early forms of hermeneutical subjectification involved the sort of asymmetrical, hierarchical distribution of power in which a silent authority commanded, judged, deciphered, and eventually absolved the confessional discourse and its author. But the reading now under consideration holds that Foucault does not assume that asymmetry and hierarchy are of the essence of disciplinary power. Nor does he believe, it is claimed, that they are what is most objectionable about it. On the contrary, one can imagine a perfected disciplinary society in which normalizing power has become so omnipresent, so finely attuned, so penetrating, interiorized, and subjectified, and therefore so invisible, that there is no longer any need for confessors, psychoanalysts, wardens, and the like. In this fully "panopticized" society, hierarchical, asymmetrical domination of some persons by others would have become superfluous; all would surveil

and police themselves. The disciplinary norms would have become so thoroughly internalized that they would not be experienced as coming from without. The members of this society would, therefore, be autonomous. They would have appropriated the other as their own and made substance subject. Class domination would have given way to the kingdom of ends. The ideal speech situation would have been realized. But, it is claimed, this would not be freedom.

This picture of total, triumphant panopticism is held to be significant not empirically — as a prediction about the future course of historical development — but, rather, conceptually — for the new light it casts on the humanist ideals of autonomy and reciprocity. It suggests that these cannot, after all, be seen as genuinely oppositional ideals but are, rather, the very goals of disciplinary power. Conversely, it suggests that hierarchy and asymmetry are not, as humanists suppose, essential to that power but, rather, that they are only imperfections to be eliminated through further refinement. It suggests, therefore, that even Habermas's version of humanist ideals is internal to the disciplinary regime and devoid of critical, emancipatory force with respect to it. Thus, such ideals must be rejected on normative grounds.

Is this position defensible? Consider how a sophisticated Habermassian humanist might reply to the line of reasoning just sketched. Suppose she were to claim that what Foucault envisions as the realization of autonomous subjectivity is not that at all but only pseudoautonomy in conditions of pseudosymmetry; that despite appearances, the subject side and the object side do not really coincide yet; that the internalized other is still other; that self-surveillance is surveillance nonetheless and implies the hierarchical domination of one force by another; that the fact that everyone does it to herself or himself equally does not make it genuinely symmetrical self-rule of autonomous subjects.

I take it that a Habermassian humanist would be hard-pressed to make good such claims. By hypothesis, the members of the fully panopticized society are in an ideal speech situation, so that notion will have no critical force here. It will be necessary to invoke some other criterion to distinguish between "real" and "pseudo" autonomy, and it is not clear what such a criterion could possibly be.

Suppose, though, that the Habermassian humanist takes a different tack and grants Foucault his assumption of "real" autonomy and symmetry. Suppose that she simply digs in and says, "If that's discipline, I'm for it." This would be to concede that these humanist notions have no critical force with respect to the fully panopticized society. But it would also be to claim that this is no objection to them, since there is no good reason to oppose such a society. Such a society seems objectionable only because Foucault has described it in a way that invites the genetic fallacy, that is, because he has made it the outcome of a historical process of hierarchical, asymmetrical coercion wherein people have been, in Nietzschean parlance, "bred" to autonomy. But this is a highly tendentious description. Why not describe it instead as a form of life developed on the basis of new, emergent communicative competences, competences that, though perhaps not built into the very logic of evolution, nonetheless permit for the first time in history the socialization of individuals oriented to dialogic political practice? Why not describe it as a form of life that is desirable since it no longer takes human needs and desires as brute, given facts to be either satisfied or repressed but takes them, rather, as accessible to intersubjective linguistic reinterpretation and transformation? Such access, after all, would widen the sphere of practical-political deliberation and narrow that of instrumental-technical control and manipulation.

This response shifts the burden of argument back onto Foucault. By claiming that panoptical autonomy is not the horror show Foucault took it to be, the Habermassian humanist challenges him to state, in terms independent of the vocabulary of humanism, exactly what is wrong with this hypothetical society and why it ought to be resisted. Moreover, it would not suffice for this purpose for Foucault merely to invoke such terms as 'subjection' and 'normalization'. To say that such a society is objectionable because it is normalizing is to say that it is conformist or represents the rule of *das Man:* this, in effect, would be to appeal to something like authenticity, which (as Derrida and perhaps even the later Heidegger himself understood) is simply another version of autonomy, albeit a detranscendentalized one.

Ultimately, then, a normative rejection of humanism will require appeal to some alternative, posthumanist, ethical paradigm capable

of identifying objectionable features of a fully realized autonomous society. It will require, in other words, nothing less than a new paradigm of human freedom. Only from the standpoint of such a paradigm can Foucault or his interpreters make the case for a normative rejection of humanism.

Foucault, however, does not offer an alternative, posthumanist ethical paradigm. He does occasionally suggest that protest urged in the name of the pleasures of our bodies may have greater emancipatory potential than that made in the name of the ideal of autonomy. But he neither justifies nor elaborates this suggestion. Nor does he give us convincing reasons to believe that claims couched in some new "body language" would be any less subject to mystification and abuse than humanist claims have been.

It looks, therefore, as though the reading of Foucault as a normative rejectionist of humanism pushes us to choose between a known ethical paradigm and an unknown *x*. As long as we keep the discussion on this moral-philosophical plane, we are justified in siding with Habermas; we must balk at rejecting the idea of autonomy, at least until the Foucauldians fill in their *x*. But I suspect it will be more fruitful to hold off that conclusion for a while and to shift the debate onto a more hermeneutical and sociological plane. Let me rather recast the issue as a choice between two sets of fears or conceptions of danger.

Recall Foucault's nightmare of the fully panopticized society. Now consider that Habermas, too, describes a possible "brave new world" scenario for the future — but his version is the diametrical opposite of Foucault's. Habermas fears "the end of the individual," a form of life in which people are no longer socialized to demand rational, normative legitimations of social authority.[22] In this dystopian vision, they just cynically go along out of privatized strategic considerations, and the stance of communicative interaction in effect dies out.

Instead of asking which of these "brave new worlds" is the good one and which is the bad, we might ask which best captures our worst fears about contemporary social trends. But that question is too complex to be settled by exclusively moral-philosophical means. It is in part a question about empirical tendencies within contemporary Western societies and in part a question about the fears, and thus about the social identities and historical self-interpretations, of mem-

bers of such societies. Hence, it is a question with an irreducible hermeneutical dimension: it demands that we weigh alternative ways of situating ourselves with respect to our past history and that we conceive ourselves in relation to possible futures, for example, as political agents and potential participants in oppositional social movements. To pose the issue in this way is to acknowledge the need for a *major* interdisciplinary, hermeneutical effort — an effort that brings to bear all the tools of historical, sociological, literary, philosophical, political, and moral deliberation in order to assess both the viability of our very strained and multivalent traditions and the possibilities of oppositional social movements. But once this is acknowledged, there is no assurance that such an effort can be contained within the terms of a choice between Habermas and Foucault.

This last point becomes especially salient when we consider that just such an interdisciplinary reassessment of humanism is now being undertaken by a social and intellectual movement without strong links to either Habermas or Foucault. I refer to the interdisciplinary community of feminist scholars and activists who are interrogating the concept of autonomy as a central value of male-dominated modern Western culture. Within this movement, a number of different perspectives on autonomy are being debated. At one end of the spectrum are those, like Simone de Beauvoir, who understand women's liberation precisely as securing our autonomy in the classical humanist sense.[23] At the other end are those, like Alison M. Jaggar, who reject autonomy on the grounds that it is an intrinsically masculinist value, premised on a mind-body, intellect-affect, will-nature dualism, linked to an invidious male-female dichotomy and positing woman (nature, affect, body) as the other to be mastered and suppressed.[24] In between are several mediating positions. There are those, like Carol Gould, who argue that autonomy is only one-half of a fully human conception of freedom and the good life and that it must be supplemented with the "feminine" values of care and relatedness that humanist ideology has denigrated and repressed.[25] There are those, influenced by Carol Gilligan, who claim that we need to acknowledge that there are now in operation two (currently gender-associated) moralities with two different concepts of autonomy correlated with public life and private life, respectively.[26] And there are those, like Iris Young, who insist that the task is, rather, to

overcome the split between those moralities and to sublate the opposition between autonomy and "femininity" or humanism and antihumanism.[27]

We cannot at present anticipate the outcome of these debates, but we can recognize their capacity to resituate, if not altogether to displace, the normative dimension of the Habermas-Foucault dispute. For the feminist interrogation of autonomy is the theoretical edge of a movement that is literally remaking the social identities and historical self-interpretations of large numbers of women and of some men. Insofar as the normative dispute between Habermas and Foucault is ultimately a hermeneutical question about such identities and interpretations, it cannot but be affected, perhaps even transformed, by these developments.

Has Foucault, then, given us good reasons to reject humanism on normative grounds? Strictly speaking, no. But with respect to the larger question of the viability of humanism as a normative ideal, the results are not yet in; not all quarters have been heard from.

4

Is Michel Foucault a "Young Conservative"? Has he demonstrated the superiority of a rejectionist critique of modernity over a dialectical one? The scorecard, on balance, looks roughly like this.

First, when Foucault is read as rejecting humanism exclusively on conceptual and philosophical grounds, Habermas's charge misses the mark. Foucault is not necessarily aspiring to a total break with modern values and forms of life just because he rejects a foundationalistic metainterpretation of them. Indeed, the project of de-Cartesianizing humanism is in principle a laudable one. But, on the other hand, it is understandable that Habermas should take the line that he has, since Foucault has not done the conceptual work required to elaborate and complete a merely philosophical rejection of humanism.

Second, when Foucault is read as rejecting humanism on strategic grounds, Habermas's charge is on target. Foucault has failed to establish that a pragmatic, de-Cartesianized humanism lacks critical force in the contemporary world. On the contrary, there are grounds for believing that such humanism is still efficacious, indeed doubly so. On the one hand, it tells against still-extant forms of premodern

domination; on the other hand, it tells against the forms of administratively rationalized domination described in *Discipline and Punish.* Foucault has not, then, made the case for strategic rejectionism.

Finally, when Foucault is read as rejecting humanism on normative grounds, moral-philosophical considerations support Habermas's position. Without a nonhumanist ethical paradigm, Foucault cannot make good his normative case against humanism. He cannot answer the question, Why should we oppose a fully panopticized, autonomous society? And yet, it may turn out that there will be grounds for rejecting, or at least modifying and resituating, the ideal of autonomy. If feminists succeed in reinterpreting our history so as to link that ideal to the subordination of women, then Habermas's own normative paradigm will not survive unscathed. The broader question about the normative viability of humanism is still open.

All told, then, Michel Foucault is not a "Young Conservative." But neither has he succeeded in demonstrating the superiority of rejectionist over dialectical criticism of modern societies.

Notes

1. Jürgen Habermas, "Modernity versus Postmodernity," *New German Critique* 22 (Winter 1981): 3–14.

2. Habermas, "Modernity versus Postmodernity," and "The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment: Rereading *Dialectic of Enlightenment,*" *New German Critique* 26 (Spring/Summer 1982): 13–30.

3. David C. Hoy, "Power, Repression, Progress: Foucault, Lukes, and the Frankfurt School," *Triquarterly* 52 (Fall 1981): 43–63, and "The Unthought and How to Think It" (American Philosophical Association, Western Division, 1982).

4. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago, 1982).

5. Hoy, "Power, Repression, Progress," and "The Unthought and How to Think It."

6. Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault.*

7. Martin Heidegger. "Overcoming Metaphysics," in *The End of Philosophy,* trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York, 1973), 84–110, and "The Age of the World Picture," in *"The Question concerning Technology" and Other Essays,* trans. William Lovitt (New York, 1977), 115–124.

8. Heidegger, "Overcoming Metaphysics"; "The Age of the World Picture"; "The Question concerning Technology," in *"The Question concerning Technology" and Other Essays,* 3–35; and "The Letter on Humanism," trans. Frank A. Capuzzi, in *Basic Writings,* ed. David Farrell Krell (New York, 1977), 189–242.

9. Heidegger, "The Letter on Humanism."

10. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences,* trans. pub. (New York, 1973), and *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison,* trans. Alan Sheridan (New York, 1978).

11. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction,* trans. Robert Hurley (New York, 1978), and "Truth and Subjectivity," Howison Lectures, University of California, Berkeley, 20–21 October 1980.

12. Foucault, *I, Pierre Rivière, Having Slaughtered My Mother, My Sister, and My Brother . . .: A Case of Parricide in the Nineteenth Century,* trans. Frank Jellinek (New York, 1975), and *Herculine Barbin: Being the Recently Discovered Memoirs of a Nineteenth-Century French Hermaphrodite,* trans. Richard McDougall (New York, 1980).

13. Hoy, "Power, Repression, Progress," and "The Unthought and How to Think It."

14. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), and "Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory," *Journal of Philosophy* 77, no. 9 (September 1980): 505–572; and Gerald Dworkin, "The Nature and Value of Autonomy" (1983).

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16. Louis Althusser, *For Marx,* trans. Ben Brewster (New York, 1970).

17. See, for example, essays by Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy in *Rejouer le politique* (Paris, 1982).

18. Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis,* trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston, 1975).

19. Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault.*

20. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality,* vol. 1; "Truth and Subjectivity"; *The History of Sexuality,* vol. 2, *The Use of Pleasure,* trans. Robert Hurley (New York, 1985); and *The History of Sexuality,* vol. 3, *The Care of the Self,* trans. Robert Hurley (New York, 1986).

21. Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews,* ed. Donald F. Bouchard, trans. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca, N.Y., 1977).

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10

Foucault: Critique as a Philosophical Ethos

Richard J. Bernstein

Our age is, in especial degree, the age of criticism, and to criticism everything must submit.

Kant, Preface to The Critique of Pure Reason

One of the last essays that Foucault wrote before his untimely death is the short text "What Is Enlightenment?"[1] It is a remarkable text for many reasons. When we recall Foucault's sharp critique of Kant and Kantian problematic in *The Order of Things*, it may seem surprising that he turns to a reading of Kant's famous essay, published in November 1784, in order to show the thread that connects his work with the "type of philosophical interrogation" (p. 42) that Foucault claims Kant initiated. But as any close reader of Foucault knows, his writings are filled with surprises and novel twists. It is almost as if Foucault started each new project afresh, bracketing what he had written previously, constantly experimenting with new lines of inquiry. This is one reason why reading Foucault is so provocative, disconcerting, and frustrating. For just when we think we have grasped what Foucault is saying and showing, he seems to dart off in new directions (and even seems to delight in frustrating attempts to classify and fix what he is doing). But Foucault's essay is much more than a reflection on the question What is enlightenment? and its relation to the "attitude of modernity." It is, in the classical sense, an apologia, a succinct statement and defense of his own critical project. It is also an apologia in the sense that Foucault seeks to answer (at

least obliquely) the objections of many of his critics. During the last decade of his life Foucault was being pressed about the normative status of his own critical stance. It becomes clear that he is defending himself against what he calls the "blackmail" of the Enlightenment. Although he emphasizes the importance of Kant's texts for defining a certain manner of philosophizing that is concerned with the present, one that also reflects on the *relation* of philosophizing to the present, this

> does not mean that one has to be "for" or "against" the Enlightenment. It even means precisely that one has to refuse everything that might present itself in the form of a simplistic and authoritarian alternative: you either accept the Enlightenment and remain within the tradition of its rationalism (this is considered a positive term by some and used by others, on the contrary, as a reproach); or else you criticize the Enlightenment and then try to escape from its principles of rationality (which may be seen once again as good or bad). And we do not break free of this blackmail by introducing "dialectical" nuances while seeking to determine what good and bad elements there may have been in the Enlightenment. (P. 43)

The last sentence is an allusion to the German tradition of critical theory, and specifically to Habermas. For perhaps the most formidable critic of Foucault is Habermas, for whom the question of critique and its normative foundations has been one of the central issues of his corpus.[2] Habermas, who acknowledges the insight and force of Foucault's brilliant critical analyses of modernity, nevertheless argues that Foucault "contrasts his critique of power with the 'analysis of truth' in such a fashion that the former becomes deprived of the normative yardsticks that it would have to borrow from the latter."[3] In short, Habermas thinks that Foucault's critical project, for all its insight, is nevertheless enmeshed in serious "performative contradictions." But from Foucault's perspective, Habermas, like others who develop similar lines of argument, is engaged in Enlightenment blackmail.

The question that I want to probe here is, what does Foucault mean by critique, especially when he speaks of an attitude, "a philosophical ethos that could be described as a permanent critique of our historical era" (p. 42)? I want to focus on what precisely is *critical* in this "permanent critique." This question is not only crucial for

understanding Foucault but has a much more general significance. For the question of critique, especially a critique of the present historical era, has become one of the most important issues of our time. To use a Wittgensteinian expression, the very "grammar" of critique seems to presuppose some measure or standard, some basis for critique. And yet there has been so much skepticism about any and all appeals to standards and "foundations" that one is compelled to reflect on the very intelligibility of the concept of critique. The issue is especially poignant in regard to Foucault because he has been read as calling into question and undermining any privileged discourse or "position" from which we can engage in critique. For Foucault, talk about "normative foundations" elicits "normalization," which he takes to be one of the primary dangers of the "disciplinary society." To phrase it in a slightly different way, we want to know whether it makes sense to speak of critique without implicitly or explicitly presupposing some "basis" for the critique, a "basis" that in *some* sense is defended, warranted, or affirmed. Foucault's critics argue that his concept of critique is confused and/or incoherent. Yet Foucault and many of his defenders appear to claim that Foucault has developed a new type of critical stance that does *not* implicitly or explicitly appeal to any basis, ground, or normative foundations.

The question of the status, character, and meaning of critique has already received a great deal of attention both by critics and defenders of Foucault. Much of the recent prolific literature on his thought has gravitated toward "an effort to think through the practical or political consequences of Foucault's genre of critical thinking."[4] But what precisely is this "genre of critical thinking"? To answer this question, I will proceed in three stages. First, I want to highlight some of Foucault's key claims in "What Is Enlightenment?" as they pertain to the question of critique. Second, I want to consider the strong case that has been made against Foucault, one that seeks to expose his confusions, contradictions, and incoherence. Third, I will consider the ways in which Foucault and his defenders have sought to defuse and answer these objections. Proceeding in this manner will enable me to return to the question, What is this "philosophical ethos that could be described as a permanent critique of our historical era"?

1

Foucault begins his essay with a thought experiment. "Let us imagine that the *Berlinische Monatschrift* still exists and that it is asking its readers the question: what is modern philosophy? Perhaps we could respond with an echo: modern philosophy is the philosophy that is attempting to answer the question raised so imprudently two centuries ago: *Was ist Aufklärung?*" (p. 32). According to Foucault, this is the question that philosophers have been confronting ever since Kant, "a question which modern philosophy has not been capable of answering and yet which it has never managed to get rid of, either" (p. 32). Foucault claims that Kant confronted this question in a novel way, that he initiated a new way of thinking about philosophy and its relation to its historical present. For Kant, enlightenment "is neither a world era to which one belongs, nor an event whose signs are perceived, nor the dawning of an accomplishment. Kant defines *Aufklärung* in an almost entirely negative way, as an *Ausgang*, an 'exit,' a 'way out.' He is not seeking to understand the present on the basis of a totality or a future achievement. He is looking for a difference: what difference does today introduce with respect to yesterday?" (p. 34).

Foucault is already anticipating the thread that connects him with Kant. For Foucault's experiments with writing a "history of the present" are directed to highlighting what is different in the present without any appeal to a "totality or a future achievement." He ruthlessly excludes any appeal to teleology or the progressive development of history. Foucault tells us that Kant thinks of enlightenment as a "way out," but this doesn't mean we have any basis for hope or looking forward to a future achievement that will redeem us. Enlightenment is a process, a task, an obligation that releases us from immaturity — an immature status for which man himself is responsible. Enlightenment means achieving mature responsibility (*Mündigkeit*). Enlightenment is "the moment when humanity is going to put its own reason to use, without subjecting itself to any authority. . . . And it is precisely at this moment that the critique is necessary, since its role is that of defining the conditions under which the use of reason is legitimate in order to determine what can be known, what must be done, and what may be hoped" (p. 38).[5]

But if we are to understand how Kant's text is located "at the crossroads of critical reflection and reflection on history" (p. 38), then we need to examine the other key term that Foucault introduces in his thought-experiment: "modernity." Foucault disclaims any attempt to give a full-scale analysis of modernity or enlightenment. Nevertheless, drawing upon Baudelaire, Foucault tells us that "modernity" is not primarily a term for denoting a period or epoch of history. Rather, he wants to speak of modernity as an attitude, "a mode of relating to contemporary reality," an *ethos*. It is "a mode of relating to contemporary historical reality where there is an ironic heroization of the present" (p. 40). "For the attitude of modernity, the high value of the present is indissociable from a desperate eagerness to imagine it, to imagine it otherwise than it is, and to transform it not by destroying it but by grasping it in what it is" (p. 41). Summing up, Foucault tells us, "Modern man, for Baudelaire, is not man who goes off to discover himself, his secrets and his hidden truth; he is the man who tries to invent himself. This modernity does not "liberate man in his own being; it compels him to face the task of producing himself" (p. 42).

Here too Foucault is at once anticipating and defending his own attitude to the present, his own ethos. For Foucault relentlessly and scathingly attacks the very idea that human beings have some hidden essence that we can presumably discover and that, once revealed, enables us to achieve freedom and autonomy. There is *no* hidden essence to be discovered; there is no hidden *depth* revealing what we truly are; there is only the task of producing or inventing ourselves. This is what Foucault calls 'ethics' in his late writings.

It is these converging reflections on enlightenment and modernity that provide the background for Foucault's central claim that Kant initiated a new type of philosophical interrogation, "one that simultaneously problematizes man's relation to the present, man's historical mode of being, and the constitution of the self as an autonomous subject" (p. 42). The legacy of Kant that Foucault stresses "is not faithfulness to doctrinal elements, but rather the permanent reactivation of an attitude — that is, of a philosophical ethos that could be described as a permanent critique of our historical era" (p. 42).

In characterizing this ethos, Foucault first gives a negative characterization stressing two points. The first I have already anticipated.

For this permanent reactivation means a refusal of enlightenment blackmail, a refusal to get trapped in declaring oneself to be "for" or "against" enlightenment. The second point is to distinguish sharply between enlightenment and humanism. Throughout his writings Foucault has always set himself against humanism (although the meaning of "humanism" and the precise target of Foucault's attack changes in the course of his writings).[6] In this context, however, by "humanism" Foucault means a set of themes that reappear in the most diverse contexts ranging from Christian humanism to Nazi humanism where there is an unexamined reliance on dubious conceptions of man "borrowed from religion, science, or politics" (p. 44). Enlightenment must not be confused with humanism. Indeed, Foucault's point is even stronger. Enlightenment as a principle of critique and a permanent creation of ourselves is *opposed* to humanism.

But still, even if we are careful about avoiding enlightenment blackmail and sharply distinguishing enlightenment from humanism, we need a "positive" characterization of this philosophic ethos of critique of the historical present. It is at this point in Foucault's own "little text" that we can most clearly discern the sense in which it can be read as an apologia. Foucault begins his positive characterization by telling us that this philosophic ethos is a "limit attitude." This, of course, has Kantian resonances. But here Foucault sharply distinguishes his understanding of a limit attitude from Kant's view. In a succinct but dense passage, Foucault gives one of the most complete statements of what he means by critique.

> Criticism is no longer going to be practiced in the search for formal structures with universal value, but rather as a historical investigation into events that have led us to constitute ourselves and to recognize ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying. In that sense criticism is not transcendental, and its goal is not that of making metaphysics possible: it is genealogical in its design and archaeological in its method. Archaeological — and not transcendental — in the sense that it will not seek to identify the universal structures of all knowledge or of all possible moral action, but will seek to treat the instances of discourse that articulate what we think, say, and do as so many historical events. And this critique will be genealogical in the sense that it will not deduce from the form of what we are what is impossible for us to do and to know; but it will separate out, from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibility of no longer being,

doing, thinking what we are, do, or think. It is not seeking to make possible a metaphysics that has finally become a science; it is seeking to give new impetus, as far and wide as possible, to the undefined work of freedom. (P. 46)[7]

Such a "historical-critical attitude must also be an experimental one," and it must be local and specific, always pressing specific limits in order to grasp "the points where change is possible and desirable, and to determine the precise form this change should take" (p. 46). Anticipating the objection that we caught within a self-referential inconsistency, Foucault tells us we have "to give up hope of our ever acceding to any complete and definitive knowledge of what may constitute our historical limits" (p. 47). The possibility of moving beyond these limits is always itself limited. This is why we are always in the position of beginning again. This is why a critique of the present requires *permanent reactivation.*

Foucault reiterates his main points and indicates his affinity with Kant's interrogation when he declares, "The critical ontology of ourselves has to be considered not, certainly, as a theory, a doctrine, nor even as a permanent body of knowledge that is accumulating; it has to be conceived as an attitude, an ethos, a philosophic life in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them" (p. 50).[8]

2

Now the problem or rather the cluster of problems that has drawn the fire of some of Foucault's sharpest critics is already suggested in this last passage. For Foucault tells us that "the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them." But precisely how are these "moments" interrelated? In what ways are Foucault's "interpretive analytics" critical?[9] To sharpen the relevant issues, I want to consider how three critics have pressed their objections to show that Foucault's understanding of critique is confused, incoherent, or contradictory. All three acknowledge the incisiveness of Foucault's historical analyses for inter-

preting modernity, but each seeks to locate what they take to be serious confusions/contradictions.

The title of Nancy Fraser's paper "Foucault on Modern Power: Empirical Insights and Normative Confusions" indicates the problem she is concerned with.[10] Fraser gives a sympathetic account of Foucault's genealogical method, showing how he seeks to bracket questions concerning legitimacy of normative validity and how his novel analysis of power, especially modern biopower, problematizes modernity and even has important political implications.[11] But the problem she locates is, How can we reconcile Foucault's attempt to suspend *all* questions of "normative foundations" with his engaged critique of biopower? Her conclusion, after working through several unsuccessful possibilities for reconciling these tensions, is that Foucault vacillates between two equally inadequate stances.

> On the one hand, he adopts a concept of power which permits him no condemnation of any objectionable features of modernity. But at the same time, and on the other hand, his rhetoric betrays the conviction that modernity is utterly without redeeming features. Clearly what Foucault needs and needs desperately are normative criteria for distinguishing acceptable from unacceptable forms of power. As it stands now, the unquestionably original and valuable dimensions of his work stand in danger of being misunderstood for lack of an adequate normative perspective.[12]

Fraser never defines what she means by "normative" or even what an "adequate normative perspective" might look like. Care is needed here because "normative" is a term of art that suggest to many some sort of permanent ahistorical universal standards of evaluation. And it is clear that Foucault rejects any such standards. But we can drop the explicit reference to normative standards or foundations and still see the force of Fraser's critique. For she notes, "Foucault calls in no uncertain terms for resistance to domination. But why? Why is struggle preferable to submission? Why ought domination to be resisted?"[13]

It is clear from the way in which Charles Taylor begins his article on Foucault that he is concerned with a problem similar to the one posed by Fraser. For he says, "Certain of Foucault's most interesting historical analyses, while they are highly original, seem to lie along already familiar lines of critical thought. That is, they seem to offer an insight into what has happened, and into what we have become,

which at the same time offers a critique, and hence some notion of a good unrealized or repressed in history, which we therefore understand better how to rescue."[14] Taylor suggests that one might think there are two goods which need rescuing: freedom and truth. These two goods are deeply linked because "the negation of one (domination) makes essential use of the negation of the other (disguise)."[15] But as Taylor notes, "Foucault himself repudiates this suggestion. He dashes the hope, if we had one, that there is some good we can affirm, as a result of the understanding these analyses give us."[16]

In short, what Taylor is claiming is that the force and indeed the intelligibility of Foucault's "genre" of critique seem at once to affirm some good and repudiate any appeal to such a good. Unlike Fraser, who takes a more agnostic stance on the question of whether it is possible to supply an "adequate normative perspective" that is compatible with Foucault's "empirical insights," Taylor claims that Foucault's unstable position is "ultimately incoherent."[17]

Taylor seeks to justify this charge by sketching three successive analyses of Foucault, each of which is progressively more radical in the sense that while each may initially lead us to think that Foucault is affirming some good, the final consequence to be drawn is that there is no such good to be affirmed. The first analysis (taken from *Discipline and Punish*) opposes the classical liturgical idea of punishment to the modern "humanitarian one," but refuses to value the second over the first because "humanitarianism" is seen as a growing system of discipline and control. The second analysis seems to give "an *evaluational* reason for refusing the evaluation which issues from the first analysis."[18] Foucault calls into question the very idea that we have a hidden nature that is being controlled and repressed. The ideology of "expressive liberation" turns out to be just a strategy of disciplinary power. This might lead us to think that we need to be liberated from *this* illusion — a liberation that is "helped by our unmasking falsehood; a liberation aided by the truth."[19] This is the third analysis. But according to Taylor, Foucault refuses this value position as well. He refuses to affirm the goods of freedom and truth. This is what Taylor calls Foucault's Nietzschean stance — and it is incoherent. Why? Because, Taylor claims, "'power' belongs in a semantic field from which 'truth' and 'freedom' cannot be excluded."[20] The

very concept of power, even in Foucault's reformulation, does not make sense unless there is at least an implicit appeal to liberation from dominating forms of power. Furthermore, it requires an appeal to "truth" because the imposition of control "proceeds by foisting illusion upon us; it proceeds by disguises and masks." Consequently, Foucault's critical stance is incoherent because "the Foucauldian notion of power not only requires for its sense the correlative notions of truth and liberation, but even the standard link between them, which makes truth the condition of liberation. And yet Foucault not only refuses to acknowledge this, but appears to undermine anything except an ironical appeal to 'freedom' and 'truth.' "[21]

Fraser and Taylor limit themselves primarily to what they take to be the "confusions/contradictions" in Foucault's critique of modern forms of biopower. But Habermas in his *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* is much more ambitious. He seeks to give a reconstruction of Foucault's intellectual development from *Madness and Civilization* to the first volume of the *History of Sexuality*. It is a rich and broad canvas on which Habermas wants to show that despite the twists and turns of Foucault's development, he is trapped within the *aporias* of the "philosophy of the subject," which is now reaching exhaustion. But for my purposes I want to highlight only those aspects of Habermas's analysis that bear on the question of critique. I have already indicated the central theme, a variation of the theme developed by Fraser and Taylor. It is the claim that Foucault constrasts his critique of power with the "analysis of truth in such a manner that the former becomes deprived of the normative yardsticks that it would have to borrow from the latter." Fleshing out what Habermas means, we can say that Habermas accuses Foucault of sliding down the slippery slope of "totalizing critique." Critique, even genealogical critique, must preserve at least one standard by which we engage in the critique of the present. Yet when critique is *totalized,* when critique turns against itself so that all rational standards are called into question, then one is caught in a performative contradiction.[22]

"Genealogy," according to Habermas, "is overtaken by a fate similar to that which Foucault had seen in the human sciences." "To the extent that it retreats into the reflectionless objectivity of a nonparticipatory, ascetic description of kaleidoscopically changing practices of power, genealogical historiography emerges from its cocoon as

precisely the *presentistic, relativistic, cryptonormative* illusory science that it does not want to be."[23] Let me explain what Habermas means. By "presentistic" Habermas is referring to the "felicitious positivistic" stance that Foucault claimed for himself in describing the contingent power/knowledge regimes. This is the "cool façade of a radical historicism."[24] But this stance requires withholding or bracketing any evaluative judgment of the kaleidoscopically changing practices. Such pure "ascetic description" leads to relativism in the sense that there is no basis or position from which one can evaluate or judge this passing array of power/knowledge regimes. It is like adopting the panoptical gaze. But Foucault does not consistently assume such a "position," nor is it even possible. He exhibits "the passions of aesthetic modernism."[25] He assumes a position of "arbitrary *partisanship* of a criticism that cannot account for its normative foundations."[26] Foucault, Habermas claims, is "incorruptible enough to admit these incoherences," but this doesn't mean that he escapes from them.[27]

Although Fraser, Taylor, and Habermas differ in their lines of attack, the cumulative force of their criticisms is to show that Foucault's understanding of a philosophic ethos as "a permanent critique of our historical era" is confused, incoherent, and enmeshed in performative contradictions.

3

Now the questions arise, Is this enlightenment blackmail? Are Foucault's critics forcing him into a grid that distorts his critical project? Are they wedded to a set of distinctions and binary oppositions, for example, normative/empirical, liberation/domination, universal/relative, rational/irrational, that Foucault subverts? Foucault himself suggests that this is so, and this is precisely what many of Foucault's defenders have claimed. Indeed, if we juxtapose the portrait of Foucault sketched by his critics with what Foucault says in "What Is Enlightenment?" we are struck by glaring disparties. Foucault doesn't defend a stance of "felicitious positivism"; he defends the permanent reactivation of critique of our historical era. He shows his awareness that a "limit attitude" is itself always limited. He doesn't bracket the question of freedom and liberation. He even speaks of the need "to

grasp the points where change is possible and desirable, and to determine the precise form this change should take" (p. 46). Now, of course, many responses are possible to these discrepancies between what Foucault says and the charges his critics bring against him: he is changing his mind once again; he is adopting a more conciliatory tone; he is rewriting his own history; he is making claims that contradict what he says in other places; and so forth. But we might also entertain the possibility that something has gone wrong here. Perhaps we can give a different, more sympathetic reading of what Foucault is doing that makes sense of his genre of critique and escapes from the harsh criticisms of those who claim his position is incoherent. This is the possibility that I want to explore by probing a number of interrelated themes in his work. In each case I want to show how they enable us to get a better grasp of his critical intent and yet still leave us with difficult unresolved problems.

The Rhetoric of Disruption

Throughout his writings Foucault not only returns again and again to the multiple uses of language; he is himself an extraordinary and skillful rhetorician. The question arises, To what end or purpose does he use rhetoric, and how does it work? The answer is complex. But the main point is nicely brought out by William Connolly when he says, "The rhetorical figures, to use a phrase of Nietzsche's, incite us to 'listen to a different claim' rather than to accept the findings of an argument."[28] In part, Foucault seeks to break and disrupt the discourse that has preoccupied so much of modern philosophy, a discourse in which we have become obsessed with epistemological issues and questions of normative foundations. And he does this because he wants to show us that such a preoccupation distracts us and even blinds us from asking new kinds of questions about the genesis of social practices that are always shaping us and historically limiting what we are. Foucault deploys "rhetorical devices to incite the experience of discord or discrepancy between the social construction of self, truth, and rationality and that which does not fit neatly within their folds."[29] He seeks "to *excite* in the reader the experience of discord between the social construction of normality and that which does not fit neatly within the frame of these constructs."[30] In

this respect we can draw parallels with Nietzsche's multiple styles and also with that other great skeptical gadfly, Socrates, who also sought to disrupt the conventional and comforting convictions of his interlocutors. Viewed in this way, we can make sense of Foucault's attraction to metaphors of strategy and tactics. It is this rhetoric of disruption that is the source of Foucault's critical sting. There are even those, like Dreyfus and Rabinow, who claim that "Foucault uses languages to articulate an understanding of our situation which moves us to action."[31] (Later I want to return to this claim.)

But how does Foucault *do* this? How do his rhetorical strategies work? A full-scale answer would have to examine his own micro- and macropractices, that is, his *specific* use of rhetorical devices and figures as well as the way in which he carefully crafts his works.

> The Foucauldian rhetorical strategy works, for instance, through displacement of . . . unifying or mellow metaphors by more disturbing ones; and by conversion of noun forms giving solidity to modern conceptions of truth, subject, and normality into verbs that present them as constructions; and by the posing of questions left unanswered in the text; and by the introduction of sentence fragments that communicate even though they do not fit into the conventional form that gives primacy to the subject.[32]

We can even grasp Foucault's use of that favored rhetorical device of Nietzsche, hyperbole. One might think, for example, that Foucault is heralding the death of the subject, that he is claiming that the subject itself is *only* the result of the effects of power/knowledge regimes, that he completely undermines and ridicules any and all talk of human agency. There is plenty of textual evidence to support such claims. But is is also clear, especially in his late writings when he deals with the question of the self's relation to itself and the possibility of "the man who tries to invent himself," that he is not abandoning the idea that "we constitute ourselves as subjects acting on others."[33]

Or again, especially in his essays in *Power/Knowledge,* it looks as if Foucault is abandoning any appeal to truth or reducing truth to a mere effect of power/knowledge regimes. But Foucault also sharply criticizes the polemicist who "proceeds encased in privileges that he possesses in advance" and refuses to recognize his adversary as "a subject having the right to speak." The polemicist objective "will be,

not to come as close as possible to a difficult *truth,* but to bring about the triumph of the just cause he has been manifestly upholding from the beginning" (emphasis added).[34]

Or still again, for all of Foucault's skepticism about expressive notions of freedom and liberty, we have seen that in "What Is Enlightenment?" he claims his type of critique "is seeking to give new impetus, as far and wide as possible, to the undefined work of freedom."

Now instead of claiming that Foucault is flatly contradicting himself on the question of the subject, truth, and freedom, we can read him in a different way — as deliberately using hyperbolic rhetorical constructions in order to compel us to disrupt and question our traditional *understandings* of these key concepts. And he effectively does this by showing us the dark ambiguities in the construction of these concepts and the role they have played in social practices.[35]

Now I think it is correct to read Foucault in this way. It enables us to understand the critical sting of his writings, a critical sting that results from disrupting cherished convictions and raising new sorts of questions about the historical contingencies that shape our practices. But there are problems that arise when we seek to think through how Foucault's rhetoric of disruption works. Let me illustrate this by considering an example of the macrorhetorical level of his works. Here we can review the analyses that Taylor gave in order to expose Foucault's incoherence.

When Foucault begins *Discipline and Punish* with the detailed, graphic execution of Damiens (which he immediately juxtaposes with the timetable drawn up eighty years later in the rules for the house of young prisoners in Paris), it is a stunning rhetorical device for eliciting conflicting disruptive reactions in the reader. For Foucault knows the reader will react with a sense of the horror to what initially *appears* to be the barbaric spectacle of gratuitous torture. We are seduced in taking comfort in the realization that "our" methods of punishment, whatever their effects, are much more humane, even though a doubt may be planted by the perplexing juxtaposition of the timetable. It is only gradually that our confidence begins to be undermined as we see what the process of "humanization" involves. For we come to see how "the birth of the prison" is virtually an allegory for the birth of the disciplinary society, the panoptic society

of surveillance that makes such effective use of the disciplines that control our bodies. So we might say that the rhetorical power of his analysis depends upon skillfully eliciting and at the same time undermining the evaluative reactions of the reader. And as we react in horror against what strikes us as so constraining and repressive about the disciplinary society, we are tempted to think there is some good here that is being repressed and needs to be liberated, expressed, and affirmed. But again this elicits in us the expectation of some positive theory of liberation from domination and repression. Foucault has set us up for the critical analysis of *The History of Sexuality,* an analysis that is not simply restricted to the historical genesis of contemporary discourses of sexuality but seeks to show us that standard understandings of the dynamics of liberation and repression are distortive and misleading. He also seeks to show us that the will to know the truth about ourselves turns out to be a "specific form of extortion of truth," the invention of specific types of discourse that do not liberate us from repression but rather subject us to a new, more subtle control of our bodies. And this analysis leaves us again in an ambiguous situation. For to the extent that we accept Foucault's unmasking of the "repressive hypothesis," we are compelled to question traditional narratives of liberation and domination. We are compelled to rethink what these concepts mean. Foucault, as he so frequently does at the end of his books, ironically tantalizes us with new possibilities: "Moreover, we need to consider the possibility that one day, perhaps, in a different economy of bodies and pleasures, people will no longer quite understand how the ruses of sexuality, and the power that sustains its organization, were able to subject us to that austere monarchy of sex, so that we became dedicated to the endless task of forcing its secret, or exacting the truest of confessions from a shadow."[36]

Now the point that I want to emphasize is that Foucault's rhetoric of disruption works because it at once presupposes and challenges an ethical-political horizon. He deliberately seeks to elicit conflicting responses in us, exposing fractures in "our" most cherished convictions and comforting beliefs. I speak of an "ethical-political *horizon*" because this horizon keeps receding. Foucault never quite thematizes this ethical-political perspective, and yet it is always presupposed. Without it the rhetoric of disruption would not work. One may well

be skeptical of any talk of ahistorical normative standards. But this does not make the question of what one is for or against disappear. The rhetoric of disruption and genealogical critique does not escape from the implicit affirmation of some "good," some ethical-political valorization. Even the rhetorical sting of the analyses in *The History of Sexuality* depends upon our revulsion against the idea that the will to knowledge exhibited in contemporary discourses of sexuality does not liberate us from repression but rather furthers the normalization of our docile bodies; they result in new techniques of control. Even if one thinks that *philosophical* attempts to face this issue have led us into dead ends, one can't escape the question of what it is that we are *affirming*, and why "we" affirm it. One can only go so far in clarifying what is distinctive about this new genre of critique by employing the devices of negative theology: stating what it is *not*. Foucault is a master in using these devices.[37] But the more effective he is in employing them, the greater the urgency becomes to give a positive characterization of the ethical-political perspective that informs his critique and enables his rhetoric of disruption to work. This is the issue that Foucault never squarely and unambiguously confronts.

Dangers

In 1983 Foucault was interviewed about his work in progress on the genealogy of ethics. He was asked, "Do you think that the Greeks offer an attractive and plausible alternative?" Foucault answered emphatically,

> No! I am not looking for an alternative; you can't find the solution of a problem in the solution of another problem raised at another moment by other people. You see, what I want to do is not the history of solutions, and that's the reason why I don't accept the word *alternative*. I would like to do the genealogy of problems, of *problématiques*. My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad. If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do.[38]

This claim is not only applicable to Foucault's late work in progress concerning the genealogy of ethics but also is relevant to all his genealogical studies. And it is a theme running through all his work.

His archaeological-genealogical analyses of *problématiques* are intended to specify the changing constellation of *dangers*. This is what critique as a philosophic ethos is intended to expose. And this theme has been highlighted by many of Foucault's defenders. Thus Dreyfus and Rabinow assert, "His aim has never been to denounce power *per se* nor to propound truth but to use his analysis to shed light on the specific dangers that each specific type of power/knowledge produces."[39] Again, they tell us, "Nor did he consider it his main task to offer alternative possibilities for acting. He was simply trying to diagnose *the* contemporary danger" (emphasis added).[40] David Hiley also stresses the danger theme when he says, "Yet while everything may be thought to be dangerous, he nevertheless believed that there was something uniquely dangerous about modernity."[41] What is uniquely dangerous is "the fact that everything becomes a target for normalization."[42] Now initially this does seem to be an attractive and illuminating way of understanding Foucault. And again, it does accord with the stance he takes in his genealogical critical analyses. If one wants to speak of alternatives, the first task is to grasp the dangers we confront. But when we think out this concept of danger, we also face some hard problems. For we might say that the very notion of danger is itself *value-laden:* Dangers for whom? Dangers from whose perspective? Why are these dangers "dangerous"? There is something comparable to an interpretative or hermeneutical circle here. For the very specification of what are taken to be dangers or the unique dangers of modernity only makes sense from an interpretative perspective, one that involves an *evaluation* of our situation, not just a "neutral" description but an evaluative description. After all, there are conflicting and perhaps even incommensurable claims about what are the specific dangers of modernity. Think, for example, of Heidegger's very different interpretation of the "supreme danger" we confront — the danger that arises from enframing (*Gestell*): "Thus where enframing reigns, there is *danger* in the highest sense."[43] So the talk of "dangers" or being responsive to what is intolerable only shifts the question to the adequacy or perspicuity of the evaluative-interpretative perspective from which one specifies dangers. This is why it is simply evasive or begging the question to say, as Dreyfus and Rabinow do, "What makes one interpretative theory better than another on this view has yet to be worked out, but it has to do with

articulating common concerns and finding a language which becomes accepted as a way of talking about social situations, while leaving open the possibility of 'dialogue,' or better, a conflict of interpretations, with other shared discursive practices used to articulate different concerns."[44] What are these "common concerns"? Do they include common *evaluations* of dangers? Who shares these common concerns? Here too I think there is danger of failing to see that what gets pushed out the front door is smuggled in through the back door. One might say that "quite consistent with his interpretative stance, Foucault . . . has abandoned the attempt to legitimate social organization by means of philosophical grounding" and that he refuses "to articulate normative principles."[45] But we still want to understand what makes something dangerous. Or if everything is dangerous, what is it that makes some dangers more intolerable than others. Here too there is an evaluative ethical-political bias that is operative and indeed is the basis for the very intelligibility of the talk of dangers that never becomes fully explicit or thematized.

Specificity and Subjugated Knowledges

It may be objected that to speak of an "ethical-political" perspective that is at once presupposed and secreted by Foucault's interpretative analyses is itself misleading. For it invites us to think in the very global terms that Foucault wants to avoid. Indeed, it may be argued that we can grasp the point of Foucault's genre of critique only when we fully appreciate his extreme nominalism and his insistence on specificity.[46] Despite what at times has the ring of global claims about discourses, social practices, power/knowledge regimes, Foucault is always directing our attention to what is local, specific, and historically contingent. He emphasizes this over and over again when seeking to explicate what he means by a philosophical ethos as "a permanent critique of our historical era." Insofar as such a critique is directed to opening new possibilities for thinking, acting, and grasping the points where change is possible and desirable, it must be appropriated by those who have been marginalized and subjected. In short, all effective criticism must be *local.* This theme dovetails with Foucault's claim about the changing role of the intellectual and with Foucault's deep aversion to the "inhibiting effect of global, *totalitarian theories.*"[47] He

tells us, "In contrast to the various projects which aim to inscribe knowledges in the hierarchical order of power associated with science, genealogy should be seen as a kind of attempt to emancipate historical knowledge from that subjection, to render them, that is, capable of opposition and of struggle against the coercion of a theoretical, unitary, formal and scientific discourse."[48] Once again I think there is something important about this emphasis in Foucault, although it also raises some hard problems.

One of the many good reasons why Foucault's rhetoric of disruption is so effective and has been so fertile for novel researches is because he at once captures and shapes a pervasive mood (*Stimmung*) of our time. He is not only a master of revealing the dark constraining side of the "humane" practices that shape our lives and our bodies, he is always showing us how discursive practices exclude, marginalize, and limit us.[49] He develops devastating critiques of global solutions to specific problems and exposes the treacherous ambiguities of loose talk about total revolution. We live in a time when it appears that only specific types of resistance, opposition, and revolt seem to make any sense. Contrary to the reading of Foucault that exaggerates the strain in Foucault that shows how what we are, do, and think is *only* the precipitate or result of anonymous historically contingent practices, Foucault can be read as always seeking to expose instabilities, points of resistances, places where counterdiscourses can arise and effect transgressions and change. It is the nexus of specific limits and transgressions that is his primary concern. Nevertheless, even if we stick to the specific and local, to the *insurrection of subjected knowledges,* there is an implicit valorization here that never becomes fully explicit and yet is crucial for Foucault's genre of critique.[50] For there are the subjected knowledges of women, blacks, prisoners, and gays, who have experienced the pain and suffering of exclusion. But throughout the world there are also the subjected knowledges of all sorts of fundamentalists, fanatics, and terrorists, who have their own sense of what are the unique or most important dangers to be confronted. What is never quite clear in Foucault is why anyone should favor certain local forms of resistance rather than others. Nor is it clear why one would "choose" one side or the other in a localized resistance or revolt.

Foucault insists, "Where there is power, there is resistance."[51] The existence of power relationships "depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance; these play the role of adversary, target, support, or handle in power relations."[52] But "adversary" and "target" are reversible and symmetrical in the sense that if *a* is *b*'s adversary or target, *b* may be *a*'s adversary or target. But when we transfer this way of speaking and place it within the context of the type of power relations that Foucault analyzes, we are compelled to face the evaluative questions, Which point of resistance is to be favored? By whom? And why? This is why the claim that Foucault's rhetoric is intended to incite us to action is so unsatisfactory. For it is never clear, even in a specific local situation, how one is to act and why. So the appeal to specificity and locality doesn't help us to elucidate the ethical-political question of how one is to act. It only relocates this issue on a specific and local level.[53]

Freedom and Skepticism

"Foucault is the great skeptic of our times. He is skeptical about dogmatic unities and philosophical anthropologies. He is the philosopher of dispersion and singularity." "To question the self-evidence of a form of experience, knowledge, or power, is to free it for our purposes, to open new possibilities for thought or action. Such freedom is the ethical principle of Foucault's skepticism."[54] This line of interpretation, this reading of Foucault, is extremely appealing, and it has been developed in different ways by commentators on Foucault who seek to defend him against "enlightenment blackmail." Foucault does seem to be working in a tradition that has analogies and parallels with Sextus Empiricus and the Pyrrhonian skeptics. This is even another reason why Foucault is at once so provocative and disconcerting. For his distinctive strength is in a radical questioning and a withholding and suspending of judgment. Nothing is to be taken for granted, not even our predisposition to demand that a thinker must "take a position." David Hiley is right when he argues that we misunderstand the tradition of skepticism and Foucault's own skeptical stance if we fail to realize that it is an ethical stance.[55] For it is only by viewing it in this manner that we can appreciate the relationship between skepticism and freedom. Freedom, then, is not to be under-

stood as the liberation of some human essence that is repressed or the affirmation and actualization of some good that is locked up in what we "essentially" are. Freedom is a type of detachment or suspension of judgment that opens new possibilities for thought and action. This does accord with the theme in "What Is Enlightenment?" that enlightenment is an exit, a way out, and with Foucault's claim that the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them. But skeptical freedom, as Hegel so brilliantly showed in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, is radically unstable. It is always in danger of becoming merely abstract, that is, it "ends up with the bare abstraction of nothingness or emptiness and cannot get any further from there, but must wait to see whether something new comes along and what it is, in order to throw it too into the empty abyss."[56] We can see how the radical instability of skepticism shows up in Foucault. For Foucault is not simply adopting a position of detachment and skeptical suspension of judgment. He is constantly tempting us with his references to new possibilities of thinking and acting, of giving new impetus to the undefined work of freedom, of the need to grasp the points where change is possible and desirable, and of determining the precise form these changes should take. But the problem is that these references to desirable new possibilities and changes are in danger of becoming empty and vacuous unless we have some sense of which possibilities and changes are *desirable* and why. We can accept Foucault's claim that a permanent reactivation of the philosophical ethos of critique does not require the critic to lay out blueprints for the future or "alternatives." Foucault himself is in that tradition that stresses that the primary function of the critic is to analyze the present and to reveal its fractures and instabilities, the ways in which it at once limits us and points to the transgression of these limits. But we must be extremely wary of sliding from references to new possibilities of thinking, acting, and being to a *positive* evaluation of such possibilities.

No one has revealed the dark possibilities that can erupt in history better than Foucault. So the same type of problem that we encountered before arises again here. Foucault's rhetoric — even the attraction of the distinctive type of skeptical freedom he adumbrates, the appeal of "the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what

we are, do, think" — is itself dependent or parasitic upon an ethical-political valorization. What does it even mean to say that some possibilities are desirable? Without thematizing this question, it is difficult to discern what precisely is critical about his genre of critique. It is *not* Foucault's critics that have imposed this problem on him. It emerges from Foucault's own insistence that there are changes that are desirable and that critique enables us "to determine the precise form this change should take." A skeptical freedom that limits itself to talk of new possibilities for thinking and acting but heroically or ironically refuses to provide any evaluative orientation as to which possibilities and changes are desirable is in danger of becoming merely empty, or even worse, it withholds judgment from those catastrophic possibilities that *have* erupted or *can* erupt.

Ethics

Foucault in his last works turned to the question of ethics, although typically he uses the term "ethics" in a novel and apparently idiosyncratic manner: "The kind of relationship you ought to have with yourself, *rapport à soi*, . . . and which determines how the individual is supposed to constitute himself as a moral subject of his own actions."[57] And if we again turn to the essay "What Is Enlightenment?" we can see how important this motif is for Foucault. It is evident in his analysis of Baudelaire's conception of modern man as the "man who tries to invent himself," who seeks to make his own life a work of art. This kind of ethics is an aesthetics of existence.

As Dreyfus and Rabinow clearly stress, Foucault's critical ontology has two separate but related components: "work on oneself and responding to one's time."[58] In his interview concerning his work in progress on the genealogy of ethics, Foucault asks, "But couldn't everyone's life become a work of art?"[59] Does Foucault's turn to such an aestheticized understanding of ethics help us to understand his critical stance? One might be inclined to respond affirmatively, at least insofar as Foucault is giving some content to the type of changes he thinks would be desirable. But for a variety of reasons I think we need to be extremely cautious in assessing this turn to ethics. Foucault himself is extremely tentative and resists the idea that his experimental studies of the genealogy of ethics yield any alternatives to

our present situation. Even sympathetic commentators have noted the many problems that he leaves unresolved.[60] Not the least of these is that the very way in which Foucault talks about ethics in terms of the self's relationship to itself *seems* to presuppose a way of speaking about the self that he had previously so effectively criticized. What precisely is a "self"? How is the "self" related to what Foucault calls a "subject"? Who is the "I" that constitutes "itself" as a moral agent? It is difficult to see how Foucault himself escapes the radical instabilities that he exposed in "Man and His Doubles." And there are other problems. For this way of speaking of ethics, which is now sharply distinguished from politics, *seems* to be radically individualistic and voluntaristic with no consideration of anything or any other beyond one's relationship to oneself.[61]

What is perhaps most ironic about Foucault's talk of ethics and freedom as it pertains to our historical situation is that its intelligibility presupposes the notion of an ethical or moral agent that *can* be free and that can "master" itself. But Foucault not only fails to explicate *this* sense of agency, his genealogical analyses seem effectively to undermine any talk of agency that is not a precipitate of power/knowledge regimes. Who or what is left to transgress historical limits?

The most generous comment to make about Foucault's tentative probings of ethics is that they are "suggestive," opening new lines of inquiry. But they do not significantly further our grasp of his genre of critique. Even if one were to grant that Foucault is tentatively exploring possibilities and changes that would be desirable, he never clarifies why an ascetic-aesthetic mode of ethical life *is* desirable.

I can now return to the question of critique as a philosophical ethos that is a permanent critique of our historical era, critique that is practiced as "a historical investigation into the events that have led us to constitute ourselves and to recognize ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying" (p. 4). I do think, as I have tried to show, that it is possible to give a more sympathetic reading of Foucault that at least blunts the criticism of those who argue that he is confused, contradictory, and incoherent. I think we can see that he is inciting us to "*listen* to a different claim." He does not disconcert and disrupt. He forces us to ask hard questions about our most

cherished beliefs and comforting convictions. He shows us novel ways in which our bodies are controlled and made docile. He consistently refuses to allow us the illusion of easy solutions and alternatives. He has a remarkable ability to compel us to ask new sorts of questions and open new lines of inquiry. He unmasks illusions. To read him as *only* revealing the way in which global power/knowledge regimes supplant each other and completely determine what we are is to misread him. For it is to screen out the many ways in which Foucault is always focusing on instabilities, points of resistance, specific points where revolt and counterdiscourse are possible. We can evaluate his hyperoscillations positively, that is, we can see them as showing us how difficult "the undefined work of freedom" is and how much patient labor is required "to give form to our impatience for liberty."

But nevertheless, as I have also tried to show, when we think through what Foucault is saying and showing, we are left with hard issues that are not resolved. These all cluster about the question of the ethical-political perspective that informs his critique. And these problems do not arise from imposing an alien grid or set of demands upon Foucault. On the contrary, they arise from his *own* practice of critique. Foucault never thematizes these problems; he never treats them with the rigor that they demand, a type of rigor he exemplified in his genealogical analyses. At best, we have only hints and suggestions, not all of which seem compatible. And at times Foucault seeks to deny us the conceptual resources for dealing with the very issues his analyses force us to confront. This is one reason why his critics find him confused, contradictory, and incoherent. Foucault's own inciting rhetoric of disruption forces us to raise questions and at the same time appears to deny us any means for effectively dealing with these questions.

Ironically, the current polemic about enlightenment blackmail tends to boomerang. It is a diversionary tactic that obscures more than it illuminates. It tends to close off issues rather than open them up. It seduces us into thinking that we are confronted with only two possibilities: either there are universal ahistorical normative foundations for critique or critique is groundless. This specious "either/or" closes off the topos that needs to be opened for discussion, the topos toward which so much of the polemic of modernity/postmodernity gravitates. How can we still today in our historical present find ways

of significantly clarifying and warranting the ethical-political perspectives that inform a critique of the present? This is *the* question that Foucault's genre of critique requires us to raise, a question he never quite answered.

Let me conclude with a statement that Foucault made in an interview conducted in May 1984 just before his death, where Foucault sounds like some of those he accused of enlightenment blackmail.

> I insist on this difference [between discussion and polemics] as something essential: a whole morality is at stake, the morality that concerns the search for the truth and the relation to the other.
>
> In the serious play of questions and answers, in the work of reciprocal elucidation, the rights of each person are in some sense immanent in the discussion. They depend only on the dialogue situation. The person asking the questions is merely exercising the right that has been given him: to remain unconvinced, to perceive a contradiction, to require more information. . . . As for the person answering the questions, he too exercises a right that does not go beyond the discussion itself; by the logic of his own discourse he is tied to the questioning of the other.[62]

I can think of no better description of the type of discussion and dialogue that is now required to probe the ethical-political perspective that informs Foucault's genre of critique.

Notes

1. Michel Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984). Page numbers in this chapter refer to this text.

2. Habermas did not publish his full scale critique of Foucault until after Foucault's death. This appears in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. F. Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987). The German text was published in 1985. In two earlier articles Habermas referred to Foucault and made some critical remarks about him. These remarks and Habermas's discussion of Foucault in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* have set off a storm of controversy. See Habermas's "Modernity versus Postmodernity," in *New German Critique* 22 (1981): 3–14, and "The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment: Re-reading *Dialectic of Enlightenment*," in *New German Critique* 26 (1982): 13–30. After Foucault's death, Habermas wrote an obituary, "Taking Aim at the Heart of the Present," which is reprinted in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, ed. by David Hoy (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

3. Jürgen Habermas, "Taking Aim at the Heart of the Present," p. 108. In this obituary Habermas relates what most impressed him when he first met Foucault in 1983: "the tension, which resists easy categorization, between the almost serene scientific reserve of the scholar striving for objectivity on the one hand, and, on the other, the political vitality of the vulnerable, subjectively excitable, morally sensitive intellectual" (p. 103).

4. Michael S. Roth, "Review Essay" of recent literature on Foucault, p. 71, in *History and Theory* 1987: 70–80. This is an excellent review of recent discussions of Foucault.

5. Foucault also tells us, "It is necessary to stress the connections that exists between this brief article and the three *critiques*" (p. 37).

6. For a discussion of what Foucault means by humanism and the distinction between humanism and enlightenment, see David R. Hiley, *Philosophy in Question: Essays on a Pyrrhonian Theme* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 101–104. The chapter in Hiley's book "Knowledge and Power" presents a lucid but different reading of the issues raised by Foucault's essay "What Is Enlightenment?" Hiley defends Foucault against the blackmail of enlightenment. Nevertheless he concludes his chapter by showing how Foucault's account "that identifies normalization and unfreedom, and that connects liberation with transgression and connects maturity with self-creation — remains deeply problematic for other reasons" (p. 110). These reasons are related to Foucault's ambivalent attitude toward the relation of an "aesthetics of existence" and its relation to a "notion of community."

7. Several commentators have debated the precise relationship between Foucault's understanding of archaeology and genealogy and whether the move to genealogy represents a break or change in his intellectual development. For different interpretations of Foucault's development, see Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics,* second edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity,* lectures 9 and 10. See also Arnold I. Davidson's essay "Archaeology, Genealogy, Ethics," in *Foucault: A Critical Reader,* ed. David Hoy.

8. Foucault takes up a number of other themes in his essay that I have not discussed, for example, Kant's distinction of the private and public use of reason. He also briefly explores how the work on our historical limits has "its generality, its systematicity, its homogeneity, and its stakes" (p. 47).

9. "Interpretative analytics" is the term used by Dreyfus and Rabinow to characterize Foucault's distinctive orientation beyond structuralism and hermeneutics. See *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics.*

10. Nancy Fraser, "Foucault on Modern Power: Empirical Insights and Normative Confusions," in *Praxis International* 3 (1981): 272–287. One should also see her two subsequent articles on Foucault: "Foucault's Body Language: A Posthumanist Political Rhetoric?" in *Salmagundi* 61 (1983): 55–70, and "Michel Foucault: A Young Conservative?' in *Ethics* 96 (1985): 165–184.

11. Fred Dallmayr has argued that Fraser and others have given too simplified and undifferentiated an analysis of Foucault's understanding of power. He shows the complexity and the changing nuances of Foucault's understanding of power in "Pluralism Old and New: Foucault on Power," in *Polis and Praxis: Exercises in Contemporary Political Theory* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1984).

12. Fraser, "Foucault on Modern Power," p. 286.

13. Fraser, "Foucault on Modern Power," p. 283.

14. Charles Taylor, "Foucault on Freedom and Truth," reprinted in *Foucault: A Critical Reader,* ed. by David Hoy, p. 69.

15. Taylor, "Foucault on Freedom and Truth," p. 70.

16. Taylor, "Foucault on Freedom and Truth," p. 69.

17. Taylor, "Foucault on Freedom and Truth," p. 83.

18. Taylor, "Foucault on Freedom and Truth," p. 80.

19. Taylor, "Foucault on Freedom and Truth," p. 80.

20. Taylor, "Foucault on Freedom and Truth," p. 91.

21. Taylor, "Foucault on Freedom and Truth," p. 93. Taylor also develops a number of other criticisms, which I have not discussed, including the claim that Foucault's conception of "power without a subject" is also incoherent.

22. This is the line of criticism that Habermas first indicated in his brief reference to Foucault in "The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment: Re-reading *Dialectic of Enlightenment*."

23. Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity,* pp. 275–276.

24. Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity,* p. 275.

25. Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity,* p. 275.

26. Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity,* p. 276.

27. Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity,* p. 276. Habermas argues that Foucault's "putative objectivity of knowledge is itself put in question (1) by the involuntary *presentism* of a historiography that remains hermeneutically stuck in its starting situation; (2) by the unavoidable *relativism* of an analysis related to

the present that can understand itself only as a context-dependent practical enterprise; (3) by the arbitrary *partisanship* of a criticism that cannot account for its normative foundations" (p. 276). He then seeks to reveal the unresolved aporias and contradictory impulses involved in each of these three areas. See *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity,* pp. 276–286.

28. William E. Connolly, "Taylor, Foucault, and Otherness," in *Political Theory* 13 (August 1985): 368. Connolly's article is a response to Charles Taylor, "Foucault on Freedom and Truth," which also originally appeared in *Political Theory* 12 (May 1984): 152–183. For Taylor's reply to Connolly, see "Connolly, Foucault, and Truth," in *Political Theory* 13 (August 1985): 377–385. Connolly is one of Foucault's most sympathetic commentators, but he also presses a number of important criticisms. See his *Politics and Ambiguity* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987).

29. Connolly, "Taylor, Foucault, and Otherness," p. 368.

30. Connolly, "Taylor, Foucault, and Otherness," p. 368.

31. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, "What Is Maturity? Habermas and Foucault on 'What Is Enlightenment?'" in *Foucault: A Critical Reader,* ed. David Hoy, p. 114.

32. Connolly, "Taylor, Foucault, and Otherness," p. 368.

33. Michel Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress," in *The Foucault Reader,* ed. by Paul Rabinow, p. 351. See also Ian Hacking's discussion of this interview, "Self-Improvement," in *Foucault: A Critical Reader,* ed. by David Hoy.

34. Michel Foucault, "Polemics, Politics, and Problematizations," in *The Foucault Reader,* p. 382. Throughout this interview Foucault speaks of "the search for the truth" and gaining "access to the truth."

35. Maurice Blanchot makes a similar point about Foucault in his subtle appreciative essay "Michel Foucault as I Imagine Him," in *Foucault/Blanchot* (New York: Zone Books, 1987). He writes,

> And were not his own principles more complex than his official discourse, with its striking formulations, led one to think. For example, it is accepted as a certainty that Foucault, adhering in this to a certain conception of literary production, got rid of purely and simply, the notion of the subject: no more oeuvre, no more author, no more creative unity. But things are not that simple. The subject does not disappear; rather its excessively determined unity is put in question. (P. 78)
>
> Similarly, when one ascribes to Foucault a quasi-nihilistic distrust of what he calls the will to truth (or the will to serious knowledge), or, additionally, a

> suspicious rejection of the idea of reason (possessing universal value), I think one is underestimating the complexity of his concerns. The will to truth, to be sure, but at what cost? What are its guises? What political imperatives are concealed beneath that highly honorable quest? (P. 79)

There is another aspect of Foucault's rhetoric that should be noted. In several of Foucault's interviews given for English-speaking audiences, he adopts a more moderate, reasonable, "democratic" tone as compared to some of his more extreme "Nietzschean" pronouncements in French. Many of Foucault's American champions tend to portray him as a "radical democrat," a domesticated Nietzschean without Nietzsche's antidemocratic biases.

36. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, vol. 1, An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), p. 159. See also Fraser, "Foucault's Body Language: A Posthumanist Political Rhetoric?"

37. Blanchot notes how the formulas of negative theology are already effectively employed in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* "Read and reread *The Archaeology of Knowledge* . . . and you will be surprised to rediscover in it many a formula from negative theology. Foucault invests all his talent in describing with sublime phrases what it is he rejects: 'It's not . . ., nor is it . . ., nor is it for that matter . . .,' so that there remained almost nothing for him to say in order to valorize what is precisely a refusal of the notion of 'value' " ("Michel Foucault as I Imagine Him," p. 74). Foucault continued to work and overwork these formulas throughout his writings. Unfortunately, many of Foucault's sympathetic commentators also tend to overwork these devices, informing us what he does *not* say, believe, or intend.

38. Michel Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress," in *The Foucault Reader,* p. 343.

39. Dreyfus and Rabinow, "What Is Maturity?" p. 116.

40. Dreyfus and Rabinow, "What Is Maturity?" p. 118.

41. Hiley, *Philosophy in Question,* p. 94.

42. Hiley, *Philosophy in Question,* p. 103.

43. Martin Heidegger, "The Question concerning Technology," in *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings,* ed. David F. Krell (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), p. 309. One may argue that the concept of danger is not necessarily "value-laden." It is being used merely as a nonevaluative *functional* expression. But this line of defense loses plausibility when one speaks of the dangers of modernity or the dangers of the disciplinary society.

44. Dreyfus and Rabinow, "What Is Maturity?" p. 115.

45. Dreyfus and Rabinow, "What Is Maturity?" p. 115. Even Dreyfus and Rabinow say that Foucault "owes us a criterion of what makes one kind of danger more dangerous than another." See the 1983 afterword to *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics,* p. 264.

46. John Rajchman emphasizes Foucault's historical nominalism in his book *Michel Foucault: The Freedom of Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

47. Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), p. 80.

48. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge,* p. 85.

49. Blanchot acutely perceives that even in *Madness and Civilization* the primary theme is "the power of exclusion." See "Michel Foucault as I Imagine Him," p. 65.

50. Habermas notes an interesting parallel between Foucault's appeal to specific *insurrections of subjugated knowledges* and Lukács more global argument about the "privileged" possibilities of knowledge by the proletariat. See *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity,* p. 280.

51. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality,* vol. 1, p. 95.

52. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality,* vol. 1, p. 95.

53. John Rajchman characterizes Foucault's politics as a postrevolutionary "politics of revolt." But he never answers the question Why revolt? or In the name of what? See chapter 2, "The Politics of Revolt," in *Michel Foucault: The Freedom of Philosophy.*

54. John Rajchman, *Michel Foucault: The Freedom of Philosophy,* pp. 2, 4.

55. Like Rajchman, Hiley approaches Foucault by situating him in the tradition of skepticism. See "Knowledge and Power," in *Philosophy in Question.* This is not a new theme in Foucault. In an interview with J. K. Simon in *Partisan Review* 38 (1971), he said, "What I am trying to do is grasp the implicit systems which determine our most familiar behavior without our knowing it. I am trying to find their origin, to show their formation, the constraint they impose upon us. I am therefore trying to place myself at a distance from them and to show how one could escape."

56. G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 51.

57. Michel Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress," p. 352.

58. Dreyfus and Rabinow, "What Is Maturity?" p. 112.

59. Michel Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics," p. 350.

60. See, for example Mark Poster, "Foucault and the Tyranny of Greece"; Arnold I. Davidson, "Archaeology, Genealogy, Ethics"; and Ian Hacking, "Self-Improvement." These essays are in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*. See also Reiner Schürmann, "On Constituting Oneself as an Anarchistic Subject," in *Praxis International* 6 (1986): 294–310.

61. See David Hiley's discussion of this problem in "Knowledge and Power," pp. 110–114.

62. Michel Foucault, "Polemics, Politics, and Problematizations: An Interview," in *The Foucault Reader*, p. 381.

11

The Critique of Impure Reason: Foucault and the Frankfurt School

Thomas McCarthy

I

Following Michel Foucault's own example, commentators have generally paid much more attention to his break with earlier forms of critical social theory than to his continuities with them. It is not surprising that a thinker of his originality, having come intellectually of age in postwar France, would eventually assert his intellectual identity in opposition to the varieties of Marxism prevalent there. But for purposes of developing a critical theory adequate to the complexities of our situation, focusing only on discontinuities can become counterproductive. In fact, viewed at some remove from the current debates, what unites Foucault with neo-Marxist thinkers is as significant as what divides them. This is particularly true of the group of theorists loosely referred to as the Frankfurt school, to whom he did not address himself in any detail. Let me begin by noting certain broad similarities between Foucault's genealogy of power/knowledge and the program of critical social theory advanced by Max Horkheimer and his colleagues in the early 1930s and recently renewed by Jürgen Habermas.[1]

• Both Foucault and the Frankfurt school call for a transformation cum radicalization of the Kantian approach to critique. The intrinsic impurity of what we call reason — its embeddedness in culture and society, its entanglement with power and interest, the historical variability of its categories and criteria, the embodied, sensuous and

practically engaged character of its bearers — makes its structures inaccessible to the sorts of introspective survey of the contents of consciousness favored by early modern philosophers and some twentieth-century phenomenologists. Nor is the turn to language or sign systems an adequate response to this altered view of reason; all forms of linguistic or discursive idealism rest on an indefensible abstraction from social practices. To explore the "nature, scope and limits of human reason," we have to get at those practices, and this calls for modes of sociohistorical inquiry that go beyond the traditional bounds of philosophical analysis. The critique of reason as a nonfoundationalist enterprise is concerned with structures and rules that transcend the individual consciousness. But what is supraindividual in this way is no longer understood as transcendental; it is sociocultural in origin.

• Correspondingly, both Foucault and the Frankfurt school reject the Cartesian picture of an autonomous rational subject set over against a world of objects that it seeks to represent and, through representing, to master. Knowing and acting subjects are social and embodied beings, and the products of their thought and action bear ineradicable traces of their situations and interests. The atomistic and disengaged Cartesian subject has to be dislodged from its position at the center of the epistemic and moral universes, and not only for theoretical reasons: it undergirds the egocentric, domineering, and possessive individualism that has so disfigured modern Western rationalism and driven it to exclude, dominate, or assimilate whatever is different. Thus the desublimation of reason goes hand in hand with the decentering of the rational subject.

• More distinctive, perhaps, than either of these now widely held views is that of the primacy of the practical over the theoretical, which Foucault shares with the Frankfurt school. A reversal of the traditional hierarchy was already proposed by Kant, only to be retracted by Hegel; it was then reinstated by the young Marx but soon faded into the background of scientific socialism. Once we have turned our attention from consciousness to culture and society, however, there is no good reason why knowledge and representation should enjoy the privilege over values and norms that Western philosophy has accorded them. Moreover, if knowledge is itself understood as a social

product, the traditional oppositions between theory and practice, fact and value, and the like begin to break down, for there are practical, normative presuppositions to any social activity, theorizing included. Like other practices, epistemic practices have to be comprehended in their sociocultural contexts. In this sense, the theory of knowledge is part of the theory of society, which is *itself* embedded in practical contexts, and in rather distinctive ways. It is his recognition of the peculiarly reflexive relation of thinking about society to what is being thought about that leads Foucault to characterize his genealogy as "history of the present." Situated in the very reality it seeks to comprehend and relating the past from the practically interested standpoint of an anticipated future, it is anything but a view from nowhere. And though Western Marxism has repeatedly succumbed to the siren calls of a scientific theory of history or a speculative philosophy of history, it has usually found its way back to a similar notion of practical reflexivity.[2] In this version of critical social theory, there is an essentially prospective dimension to writing the history of the present in which one is situated. And the projected future, which gives shape to the past, is not a product of disinterested contemplation or of scientific prediction but of practical engagement; it is a future that we can seek to bring about.

• With suitable changes in terminology, much of the above could also be said of philosophical hermeneutics. It too takes seriously the fact that reason, in its cognitive employment as well, is embedded in sociocultural contexts, mediated by natural languages, and intrinsically related to action. It too maintains that speech and action occur against immeasurable, taken-for-granted backgrounds, which are historically and culturally variable and which can never be brought fully to conscious awareness. And yet genealogy is as distinct from hermeneutics as is critical social theory. Despite some very real differences on this point, neither genealogy nor critical theory wishes to leave to the participants and their traditions the final say about the significance of the practices they engage in. Both approaches see the need for an objectivating "outsider's" perspective to get beyond shared, unproblematic meanings and their hermeneutic retrieval. Foucault's way of creating distance from the practices we live by is to display their "lowly origins" in contingent historical circumstances,

to dispel their appearance of self-evident givenness by treating them as the outcome of multiple relations of force. From the start, critical social theory was also based on a rejection of what Marx viewed as the specifically "German ideology," and Horkheimer called "the idealist madness," of understanding ideas solely in terms of other ideas. It has insisted that the full significance of ideas can be grasped only by viewing them in the context of the social practices in which they figure, and that this typically requires using sociohistorical analysis to gain some distance from the insider's view of the participants. Genetic and functional accounts of how and why purportedly rational practices came to be taken for granted play an important role in both forms of the critique of impure reason.

• In neither perspective, however, does this mean simply adopting the methods of the established human sciences. Both Foucault and the Frankfurt school see these sciences as particularly in need of critical analysis, as complicit in special ways with the ills of the present age. There are, to be sure, some important differences here, for instance, as to which particular sciences are most in need of critique and as to how total that critique should be.[3] But there are also a number of important commonalities in their critiques of the epistemological and methodological ideas in terms of which we have constituted ourselves as subjects and objects of knowledge. Furthermore, both schools are critical of the role that the social sciences and social-scientifically trained "experts" have played in the process of "rationalization." They see the rationality that came to prevail in modern society as an instrumental potential for extending our mastery over the physical and social worlds, a rationality of technique and calculation, of regulation and administration, in search of ever more effective forms of domination. Inasmuch as the human sciences have assisted mightily in forging and maintaining the bars of this "iron cage," to use Max Weber's phrase, they are a prime target for genealogical and dialectical critique.

• As ongoing practical endeavors rather than closed theoretical systems, both forms of critique aim at transforming our self-understanding in ways that have implications for practice. It is true that Foucault persistently rejected the notions of ideology and ideology critique and denied that genealogy could be understood in those terms. But

the conceptions of ideology he criticized were rather crude, and the criticisms he offered were far from devastating to the more sophisticated versions propounded by members of the Frankfurt school. It is, in fact, difficult to see why Foucault's efforts to analyze "how we govern ourselves and others by the production of truth" so as to "contribute to changing people's ways of perceiving and doing things" do not belong to the same genre.[4] On this reading, in both genealogy and critical social theory the objectivating techniques employed to gain distance from the rational practices we have been trained in afford us a critical perspective on those practices. Making problematic what is taken for granted — for instance, by demonstrating that the genesis of what has heretofore seemed to be natural and necessary involves contingent relations of force and an arbitrary closing off of alternatives, or that what parades as objective actually rests on prescriptions that function in maintaining imbalances of power — can weaken their hold upon us. Categories, principles, rules, standards, criteria, procedures, techniques, beliefs, and practices formerly accepted as purely and simply rational may come to be seen as in the service of particular interests and constellations of power that have to be disguised to be advanced or as performing particular functions in maintaining power relations that would not be subscribed to if generally recognized. Because things are not always what they seem to be and because awareness of this can create critical distance — because, in particular, such awareness can undermine the authority that derives from presumed rationality, universality, or necessity — it can be a social force for change. Whether or not this is so, as well as the extent to which it is so, is, in the eyes of both Foucault and the Frankfurt school, not a question of metaphysical necessity or theoretical deduction but of contingent historical conditions. That is, the practical significance of critical insight varies with the historical circumstances.

If the foregoing comparisons are not wide of the mark, Foucault and the Frankfurt school should be located rather close to one another on the map of contemporary theoretical options. They hold in common that the heart of the philosophical enterprise, the critique of reason, finds its continuation in certain forms of sociohistorical analysis carried out with the practical intent of gaining critical distance from the presumably rational beliefs and practices that inform

our lives. This would certainly place them much nearer to one another than to other varieties of contemporary theory, including the more influential varieties of textualism. Why, then, have the oppositions and differences loomed so large? Part of the explanation (but only part) is that the disagreements between them are no less real than the agreements. Though genealogy and critical social theory do occupy neighboring territories in our theoretical world, their relations to one another are combinative rather than peaceable. Foucault's Nietzschean heritage and the Hegelian-Marxist heritage of the Frankfurt school lead them to lay competing claims to the very same areas.

- While both approaches seek to transform the critique of reason through shifting the level of analysis to social practice, Foucault, like Nietzsche, sees this as leading to a critique that is radical in the etymological sense of that term, one that attacks rationalism at its very roots, whereas critical social theorists, following Hegel and Marx, understand critique rather in the sense of a determinate negation that aims at a more adequate conception of reason.
- While both approaches seek to get beyond the subject-centeredness of modern Western thought, Foucault understands this as the "end of man" and of the retinue of humanist conceptions following upon it, whereas critical social theorists attempt to reconstruct notions of subjectivity and autonomy that are consistent with both the social dimensions of individual identity and the situated character of social action.
- While both approaches assert the primacy of practical reason and acknowledge the unavoidable reflexivity of social inquiry, Foucault takes this to be incompatible with the context transcendence of truth claims and the pretensions of general social theories, whereas the Frankfurt theorists seek to combine contextualism with universalism and to construct general accounts of the origins, structures, and tendencies of existing social orders.
- While both approaches refuse to take participants' views of their practices as the last word in understanding them, critical social theorists do take them as the first word and seek to engage them in the process of trying to gain critical distance from those views, whereas the genealogist resolutely displaces the participants' perspective with

an externalist perspective in which the validity claims of participants are not engaged but bracketed.

- While both approaches are critical of established human sciences and see them as implicated in weaving tighter the web of discipline and domination, Foucault understands this to be a general indictment — genealogy is not a science but an "antiscience" whereas critical social theorists direct their critique against particular forms of social research while seeking to identify and develop others that are not simply extensions of instrumental rationality.
- Finally, while both approaches see the critique of apparently rational practices as having the practical purpose of breaking their hold upon us, Foucault does not regard genealogy as being in the service of reason, truth, freedom, and justice — there is no escaping the relations and effects of power altogether, for they are coextensive with, indeed constitutive of, social life generally — whereas Frankfurt school theorists understand the critique of ideology as working to reduce such relations and effects and to replace them with social arrangements that are rational in other than an instrumentalist sense.

2

With this broad comparison as a background, I would like now to take a closer and more critical look at the radical critique of reason and the rational subject that Foucault developed in the 1970s in the context of his power/knowledge studies. For purposes of defining what is at issue between him and the Frankfurt school, I shall use Habermas's attempt to renew Horkheimer's original program as my principal point of reference.

As remarked above, Foucault's genealogical project can be viewed as a form of the critique of reason. Inasmuch as modern philosophy has understood itself to be the most radical reflection on reason, its conditions, limits, and effects, the continuation through transformation of that project today requires a sociohistorical turn. What have to be analyzed are paradigmatically rational *practices,* and they cannot be adequately understood in isolation from the sociohistorical contexts in which they emerge and function. Foucault is, of course, interested in the relations of power that traverse such practices and

their contexts. He reminds us repeatedly that "truth is not the reward of free spirits" but "a thing of this world" that is "produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint."[5] Analytical attention is redirected to the rules, prescriptions, procedures, and the like that are constitutive of rational practices, to the relations of asymmetry, nonreciprocity, and hierarchy they encode, and to the ways in which they include and exclude, make central and marginal, assimilate and differentiate. This shift in focus makes us aware that there is something like a politics of truth and knowledge already at this level of analysis.[6] Irrationality, incompetence, deviance, error, nonsense, and the like get marked off in various ways from their opposites; people and practices get valorized or stigmatized, rewarded or penalized, dismissed or vested with authority on this basis. But genealogical analysis does not confine itself to the political aspects of rules and regulations "internal" to discursive practices. It also examines the "external" relations of theoretical discourses, especially the discourses of the "sciences of man," to the practical discourses in which they are "applied" — the discourses of psychologists, physicians, judges, administrators, social workers, educators, and the like — and to the institutional practices with which they are interwoven in asylums, hospitals, prisons, schools, administrative bureaucracies, welfare agencies, and the like. As soon as one tries to comprehend why a particular constellation of rules and procedures should define rational practice in a given domain, consideration of the larger sociohistorical context becomes unavoidable.

"Each society," as Foucault puts it, "has its regime of truth."[7] And genealogy is interested precisely in how we govern ourselves and others through its production. Focusing especially on the human sciences — the sciences of which humankind is the object — he examines the myriad ways in which power relations are both conditions and effects of the production of truth about human beings. In areas of inquiry ranging from psychiatry and medicine to penology and population studies, he uncovers the feedback relations that obtain between the power exercised over people to extract data from and about them — by a variety of means, from observing, examining, and interrogating individuals to surveying and administering populations — and the effects of power that attach to the qualified experts and licensed professionals who possess and apply the knowledge thus

gained. According to Foucault, the sciences of man not only arose in institutional settings structured by hierarchical relations of power; they continue to function mainly in such settings. Indeed, what is distinctive of the modern disciplinary regime, in his view, is just the way in which coercion by violence has been largely replaced by the gentler force of administration by scientifically trained experts, public displays of power by the imperceptible deployment of techniques based on a detailed knowledge of their targets. From Foucault's perspective, then, the human sciences are a major force in the disastrous triumph of Enlightenment thinking, and the panoptical scientific observer is a salient expression of the subject-centered, putatively universal reason that that thinking promotes. By tracing the lowly origins of these sciences in struggle and conflict, in particularity and contingency, in a will to truth that is implicated with domination and control, genealogy reveals their constitutive interconnections with historically changing constellations of power: "Power and knowledge directly imply one another. . . . The subject who knows, the objects to be known, and the modalities of knowledge must be regarded as so many effects of these fundamental implications of power-knowledge and their historical transformations."[8]

Although Habermas agrees with Foucault in regarding truth as "a thing of this world," he distinguishes between fundamentally different cognitive approaches marked by different configurations of action, experience, and language.[9] He does this with the aim of resisting the identification of instrumental and strategic rationality with rationality *tout court*. To construe sociocultural rationalization as the growing hegemony of techniques of power and control, of domination and administration, is not so much erroneous as partial. That reading does not grasp the selectivity of capitalist modernization, its failure to develop in a balanced way the different dimensions of rationality opened up by the modern understanding of the world. Because we are as fundamentally language-using as tool-using animals, the representation of reason as essentially instrumental and strategic is fatally one-sided. On the other hand, it is indeed the case that those types of rationality have achieved a certain dominance in our culture. The subsystems in which they are centrally institutionalized, the economy and government administration, have increasingly come to pervade other areas of life and make them over in

their own image and likeness. The resultant "monetarization" and "bureaucratization" of life is what Habermas refers to as the "colonization of the life world."

This picture of a society colonized by market and administrative forces differs from Foucault's picture of a disciplinary society in, among other ways, targeting for critique not the Enlightenment idea of a life informed by reason as such but rather the failure to pursue it by developing and institutionalizing modalities of reason other than the subject-centered, instrumental ones that have come increasingly to shape our lives. The two pictures do overlap in a number of areas. For instance, both focus on the intrication of knowledge with power that is characteristic of the sciences of man. But Foucault regards this analysis as valid for all the human sciences, whereas Habermas wants to distinguish objectivating (e.g., behavioral) approaches from interpretive (e.g., hermeneutical) and critical (e.g., genealogical or dialectical) approaches. The interests that inform them are, he argues, fundamentally different, as are consequently their general orientations to their object domains and their characteristic logics of inquiry. From this perspective, only purely objectivating approaches are *intrinsically* geared to expanding control over human beings, whereas other approaches may be suited to extending the intersubjectivity of mutual understanding or to gaining reflective distance from taken-for-granted beliefs and practices.

There is broad agreement between Foucault and Habermas that the expansion of the welfare state is increasingly dependent on the generation and application of expert knowledge of various sorts. In this regard, Foucault's account of the interrelation between social institutions geared to normalization and the growth of knowledge suited to that purpose parallels Habermas's account of the interconnection between the administrative colonization of the life world and the rise of objectivating social science. Here too the differences have chiefly to do with how all-inclusive this critical perspective can claim to be. Foucault extrapolates the results of his analyses of knowledge generated in the more or less repressive contexts he singles out for attention to the human sciences in general. One consequence of this is his clearly inadequate account of hermeneutic approaches.[10] Another is his inability to account for his own genealogical practice in other than actionistic terms — genealogical analysis ends up being

simply another power move in a thoroughly power-ridden network of social relations, an intervention meant to alter the existing balance of forces. In the remainder of section 2, I want to look more closely at two key elements of his metatheory of genealogical practice: the ontology of *power* and the representation of the *subject* as an effect of power.

Power: Ontology versus Social Theory

The differences between Foucault and Habermas are misrepresented by the usual opposition between the nominalistic particularism of the former and the abstract universalism of the latter. In his Nietzschean moments, Foucault can be as universalistic as one might like, or dislike. While he insists that he wants to do without the claims to necessity typical of foundationalist enterprises, he often invokes an ontology of the social that treats exclusion, subjugation, and homogenization as inescapable presuppositions and consequences of any social practice. And while he targets for genealogical analysis social institutions that are clearly marked by hierarchies of power, his own conception of power as a network of relations in which we are all always and everywhere enmeshed devalues questions of who possesses power and with what right, of who profits or suffers from it, and the like. (These are questions typical of the liberal and Marxist approaches that he rejects.) What we gain from adopting this conception is a greater sensitivity to the constraints and impositions that figure in any social order, in any rational practice, in any socialization process. In this expanded sense of the term, *power* is indeed a "productive network that runs through the whole social body."[11] Giving this insight an ontological twist, one could then say with Foucault, "Power produces reality, it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth,"[12] or alternatively, "Truth is not the product of free spirits" but is "produced by virtue of multiple forms of constraint."[13] It is clear, for instance, that any "regime of truth" involves privileging certain types of discourse, sanctioning certain ways of distinguishing true from false statements, underwriting certain techniques for arriving at the truth, according a certain status to those who competently employ them, and so forth. In this sense, there is indeed a "political economy" of truth, as there is of any organized social activity. That

insight is the principal gain of Foucault's ontologizing of the concept of power.

There are also losses incurred: having become more or less coextensive with constraint, power becomes all too like the night in which all cows are black. Welcoming or denouncing someone, putting someone at ease or into prison, cooperating or competing with someone — these are all equally exercises of power in Foucault's conceptualization. If his aim is to draw attention to the basic fact that patterned social interaction always involves normative expectations and thus possible sanctions, this is a rhetorically effective way of doing so. But the costs for social theory of such dedifferentiation are considerable. Distinctions between just and unjust social arrangements, legitimate and illegitimate uses of political power, strategic and cooperative interpersonal relations, coercive and consensual measures — distinctions that have been at the heart of critical social analysis — become marginal. If there were no possibility of retaining the advantages of Foucault's Nietzschean move without taking these disadvantages into the bargain, we would be faced with a fundamental choice between different types of social analysis. But there is no need to construe this as an either/or situation. We can agree with Foucault that social action is everywhere structured by background expectations in terms of which we hold one another accountable, that deviations from these are sanctionable by everything from negative affective responses and breakdowns of cooperation to explicit reprimands and punishments, and that our awareness of this accountability is a primary source of the motivated compliance that characterizes "normal" interaction.[14] And we can agree with him that the modern period has witnessed a vast expansion of the areas of life structured by instrumental, strategic, and bureaucratic forms of social interrelation. None of this prevents us from then going on to mark the sociologically and politically crucial distinctions that have figured so centrally in the tradition of critical social theory. Nancy Fraser has stated the issue here with all the desirable clarity: "The problem is that Foucault calls too many different sorts of things power and simply leaves it at that. Granted, all cultural practices involve constraints. But these constraints are of a variety of different kinds and thus demand a variety of different normative responses. . . . Foucault writes as if oblivious to the existence of the whole body of Weberian

social theory with its careful distinctions between such notions as authority, force, violence, domination and legitimation. Phenomena which are capable of being distinguished via such concepts are simply lumped together. . . . As a consequence, the potential for a broad range of normative nuances is surrendered, and the result is a certain normative one-dimensionality."[15]

The Subject: Deconstruction versus Reconstruction

Foucault has related on various occasions how "people of [his] generation were brought up on two forms of analysis, one in terms of the constituent subject, the other in terms of the economic-in-the-last-instance."[16] As we have seen, he worked himself free of the latter by, among other things, drawing upon Nietzsche to develop a "capillary" conception of power as co-extensive with the social. In working free of the former, he was able to call upon the assistance of structuralist semiotics to argue for the priority of systems of signification over individual acts thereof. Even after he distanced himself from structuralism by taking as his point of reference "not the great model of language and signs, but that of war and battle," he retained this order of priority in the form of the "regimes," the interconnected systems of discourses, practices, and institutions that structure and give sense to individual actions.[17] From the perspective of the genealogist, the subject privileged by phenomenology is in reality not the *constituens* but the *constitutum* of history and society, and phenomenology itself is only a recent chapter in the long tradition of subjectivism. At the core of that tradition is a hypostatization of the contingent outcome of historical processes into their foundational origin — not in the sense, typically, of a conscious creation but in that of an alienated objectification of subjective powers, which has then to be consciously reappropriated. This latter figure of thought is, for Foucault, the philosophical heart of the humanist project (including Marxist humanism) of mastering those forces, without and within, that compromise "man's" autonomy and thus block his true self-realization. Like Horkheimer and Adorno in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Foucault sees this as inherently a project of domination, a project that defines modern Western man's domineering relation to otherness and difference in all forms.

Foucault's reaction to this perceived state of affairs is, I want to argue, an overreaction. Owing in part to the continued influence of structuralist motifs in his genealogical phase, he swings to the opposite extreme of hypostatizing wholes — regimes, networks, *dispositifs,* and the like — over against parts, thus proposing to replace an abstract individualism with an equally abstract holism. To argue that "the individual is not to be conceived as a sort of elementary nucleus, a primitive atom," it is not necessary to maintain that the individual is merely "one of the prime effects of power."[18] One might instead defend the less radical thesis that individuation is inherently linked to socialization: we become individuals in and through being socialized into shared forms of life, growing into preexisting networks of social relations. From this perspective, Foucault's claim that the individual, who is an effect of power, is at the same time "the element of its articulation" or "its vehicle,"[19] might be construed as advancing the common sociological view that social structures are produced and maintained, renewed and transformed only through the situated actions of individual agents. But this view entails that agency and structure are *equally* basic to our understanding of social practices and that is decidedly not Foucault's approach. He wants to develop a form of analysis that treats the subject as an effect by "accounting for its constitution within a historical framework." If this were only a matter of "dispensing with the constituent subject," of avoiding all "reference to a subject which is transcendental in relation to the field of events," the disagreement would be merely terminological.[20] But it is not only the constituent, transcendental subject that Foucault wants to do without; he proposes a mode of inquiry that makes *no explanatory reference* to individual beliefs, intentions, or actions. Genealogy, he advises us, "should not concern itself with power at the level of conscious intention or decision": it should refrain from posing questions of the sort, Who has power and what has he in mind? The focus should instead by on "how things work at the level of ongoing subjugation, at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes," through which "subjects are gradually, progressively, really and materially constituted."[21] Again, if this were merely an argument for the need of *supplementing* an internalist view of social practices with an externalist one, of *balancing* an account of agency with an account of structure, of *integrating* a microanalysis of social

practices with a structural analysis of persistent patterns of interaction or with a functional analysis of their unintended consequences or with an institutional analysis of the normative contexts of individual action, there would be no incompatibility in principle between genealogy and approaches operating with some concept of agency. But Foucault does not want to supplement or balance or integrate, he wants to replace. And the results of this either/or thinking are no happier here than in the traditional theories he criticizes.

There is no hope of arriving at an adequate account of social integration if the only model of social interaction is one of asymmetrical power relations and the only model of socialization is that of an intrusion of disciplinary forces into bodies. Nor can we gain an adequate understanding of most varieties of social interaction by treating agents simply as acting in compliance with preestablished and publicly sanctioned patterns — as what Foucault calls "docile bodies" or Garfinkel calls "cultural dopes." We have to take account of their own understandings of social structures and their own reflexive use of cultural resources for making sense. This is no less true of the types of setting that most interest Foucault. As Goffman and others have made so abundantly clear, interpreting social situations, understanding what is expected in them, anticipating reactions to conformity and deviance, and using this knowledge for one's own strategic purposes are basic elements of interaction in disciplinary settings too.[22] These elements open up space for differential responses to situations, the possibility of analyzing, managing, and transforming them. Furthermore, the same competence and activity of agents is required for an adequate analysis of the rule-following practices central to Foucault's notion of power/knowledge regimes. Since rules do not define their own application, rule following is always to some degree discretionary, elaborative, ad hoc. Each new application requires the agent's judgment in the light of the specifics of the situation.[23]

One could go on at length in this vein. The point is simply to indicate how deeply the conceptual framework of agency and accountability is ingrained in our understanding of social practices. Foucault cannot simply drop it and treat social practices as anonymous, impersonal processes. To be sure, he does insist on the interdependence of the notions of power and resistance.[24] Yet he refuses

to link the latter to the capacity of competent subjects to say, with reason, yes or no to claims made upon them by others. As a result, he is hard put to identify just what it is that resists. Often he alludes to something like "the body and its pleasures."[25] But that only plunges us deeper into just the sorts of conceptual tangles he wants to avoid. For it is Foucault, after all, who so forcefully brought home to us just how historical and social the body and its pleasures are. But when the need arises, he seems to conjure up the idea of a presocial "body" that cannot be fitted without remainder into any social mold. This begins to sound suspiciously like Freud's instinct theory and to suggest a refurbished model of the "repressive hypothesis" that Foucault so emphatically rejected.[26]

If treating the subject merely as "an effect of power," which must itself then be conceptualized as a subjectless network, undercuts the very notions of discipline, regime, resistance, and the like that are central to genealogical "theory," it raises no less havoc with genealogical "practice." Who practices genealogical analysis? What does it require of them? What promise does it hold out to them? If the self-reflecting subject is nothing but the effect of power relations under the pressure of observation, judgment, control, and discipline, how are we to understand the reflection that takes the form of genealogy? Whence the free play in our reflective capacities that is a condition of possibility for constructing these subversive histories? Foucault certainly writes as if his genealogies advanced our self-understanding, and in reading them we repeatedly have the experience of their doing just that. Can we make any sense of this without some, perhaps significantly revised, notion of subjects who can achieve gains in self-understanding with a liberating effect on their lives? Charles Taylor captures this point nicely when he writes, "'Power' belongs in a semantic field from which 'truth' and 'freedom' cannot be excluded. Because it is linked with the notion of imposition on our significant desires and purposes, it cannot be separated from the notion of some relative lifting of this restraint. . . . So 'power' requires 'liberty,' but it also requires 'truth' — if we want to allow, as Foucault does, that we can collaborate in our own subjugation. . . . Because the imposition proceeds here by foisting illusion upon us, it proceeds by disguises and masks. . . . The truth here is subversive of power."[27] This metatheory, deriving from our Enlightenment heritage and shared

by the Frankfurt school, seems to make better sense of Foucault's practice than his own metatheory. If that is so, we may learn more from inquiring, as Foucault himself finally did in the 1980s, how his work develops and enriches the critical tradition extending from Kant through the Frankfurt school than from insisting that it has brought that tradition to an end.

3

In his first lecture of 1983 at the Collège de France, Foucault credited Kant with founding "the two great critical traditions between which modern philosophy is divided." One, the "analytic philosophy of truth in general," had been a target of Foucault's criticism from the start. The other, a constantly renewed effort to grasp "the ontology of the present," he acknowledged as his own: "It is this form of philosophy that, from Hegel, through Nietzsche and Max Weber, to the Frankfurt school, has formed a tradition of reflection in which I have tried to work."[28] This belated affirmation of what he calls the "philosophical ethos" of the Enlightenment signals important changes in Foucault's understanding of his critical project. In this final section I want briefly to characterize those changes in respects relevant to the discussion and then critically to examine their consequences for Foucault's treatments of the subject and power.[29]

Perhaps the clearest indication of Foucault's altered perception of the Enlightenment tradition can be found in his reflections on Kant's 1784 essay "Was ist Aufklärung?"[30] He regards that essay as introducing a new dimension into philosophical thought, namely the critical analysis of our historical present and our present selves. When Kant asked "What is Enlightenment?" writes Foucault, "he meant, What's going on just now? What's happening to us? What is this period, this precise moment in which we are living? Or in other words, What are we? As *Aufklärer*, as part of the Enlightenment? Compare this with the Cartesian question, Who am I? as a unique but universal and unhistorical subject? For Descartes, it is everyone, anywhere, at any moment. But Kant asks something else: What are we? in a very precise moment of history?"[31] From Hegel to Habermas, Foucault continues, this question has defined a way of philosophizing that he, Foucault, has adopted as his own. What separates this way from a universally

oriented "analytic of truth" is an awareness of being constituted by our own history, a resolve to submit that history to critical reflection, and a desire thereby to free ourselves from its pseudonecessities.

As I argued above, Foucault could and should have said the same of the genealogy he practiced in the 1970s, but it became clear to him only in the 1980s that his form of critique also belongs to what Taylor called the "semantic field" of Enlightenment discourse. "Thought," he now tells us, "is what allows one to step back from [a] way of acting or reacting, to present it to oneself as an object of thought and question it as to its meaning, its conditions, and its goals. Thought is freedom in relation to what one does, the motion by which one detaches oneself from it, establishes it as an object, and reflects on it as a problem."[32] Freedom, in turn, is said to be the condition and content of morality: "What is morality if not the practice of liberty, the deliberate practice of liberty? . . . Liberty is the ontological condition of ethics. But ethics is the deliberate form assumed by liberty."[33] By releasing us from a state of "immaturity," critical thinking makes possible a "practice of freedom" oriented toward a "mature adulthood" in which we assume responsibility for shaping our own lives.[34]

To be sure, behind all these Kantian formulas there lies a considerably altered critical project. Foucault stresses that faithfulness to the Enlightenment means not trying to preserve this or that element of it but attempting to renew, in our present circumstances, the type of philosophical interrogation it inaugurated — not "faithfulness to doctrinal elements, but rather the permanent reactivation of an attitude, that is, of a philosophical ethos which could be described as a permanent critique of our historical era."[35] Since the Enlightenment, this type of reflective relation to the present has taken the form of a history of reason, and that is the form in which Foucault pursues it: "I think that the central issue of philosophy and critical thought since the eighteenth century has always been, still is, and will, I hope, remain the question: *What* is this Reason that we use? What are its historical effects? What are its limits, and what are its dangers? How can we exist as rational beings, fortunately committed to practicing a rationality that is unfortunately crisscrossed by intrinsic dangers?"[36] As noted in section 2, Foucault's genealogical histories stress the local and contingent aspects of prevailing forms of ration-

ality rather than their universality. In one way this is continuous with Kant's linking of enlightenment and critique: when we dare to use our reason, a critical assessment of its conditions and limits is necessary if we are to avoid dogmatism and illusion. On the other hand, genealogy is a very different way of thinking about conditions and limits:

> If the Kantian question was that of knowing what limits knowledge has to renounce transgressing, it seems to me that the critical question today has to be turned back into a positive one: in what is given to us as universal, necessary, obligatory, what place is occupied by whatever is singular, contingent, and the product of arbitrary constraints? The point, in brief, is to transform the critique conducted in the form of necessary limitation into a practical critique that takes the form of a possible transgression. . . . Criticism is no longer going to be practiced in the search for formal structures with universal value, but rather as an historical investigation into the events that have led us to constitute ourselves and to recognize ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying. . . . It will not deduce from the form of what we are what it is impossible for us to do and to know; but it will separate out, from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do, or think. It is not seeking to make possible a metaphysics that has finally become a science, it is seeking to give new impetus, as far and as wide as possible, to the undefined work of freedom.[37]

As this passage suggests, Foucault's critical histories of the "practical systems" of rationality that "organize our ways of doing things" are at the same time genealogies of the subjects of these rational practices, investigations into the ways in which we have constituted ourselves as rational agents.[38] And their point is not to reinforce established patterns but to challenge them. Genealogy is "practical critique": it is guided by an interest in the "possible transgression" and transformation of allegedly universal and necessary constraints. Adopting an experimental attitude, it repeatedly probes the "contemporary limits of the necessary" to determine "what is not or no longer indispensable for the constitution of ourselves as autonomous subjects."[39]

Let us turn now to the two topics on which I criticized Foucault's earlier self-understanding: the subject and power. That will serve to focus my account of the theoretical shifts in his later work and to

determine more precisely where they leave him in relation to Habermas.

Power Again: Strategic and Communicative Action

My criticisms of Foucault in section 2 turned on his one-dimensional ontology: in the world he described, truth and subjectivity were reduced in the end to effects of power. He escapes this reductionism in the 1980s by adopting a multidimensional ontology in which power is displaced onto a single axis. Referring to Habermas in his first Howison Lecture at Berkeley in the fall of 1980, he distinguishes three broad types of "techniques": techniques of production, of signification, and of domination.[40] To this he adds a fourth, namely techniques of the self, which subsequently becomes the principal axis of analysis in the second and third volumes of his *History of Sexuality.* These same four dimensions are distinguished (as "technologies") in the seminar he conducted at the University of Vermont in the fall of 1982.[41] And the first three of them are elaborated (as "relations") in the afterword (1982) to Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics,* where, referring once again to Habermas, he notes that they are not "separate domains" but analytically distinguishable aspects of social action that "always overlap" in reality.[42] By 1983 Foucault seems to have settled on a three-dimensional ontology vaguely reminiscent of Habermas's tripartite model of relations to the objective world, to the social world, and to ourselves.

In volume 2 of the *History of Sexuality,* for example, he works with a distinction between fields of knowledge, types of normativity, and forms of subjectivity, with three correlated axes of analysis: discursive practices, relations of power, and forms in which individuals recognize themselves as subjects.[43] What immediately strikes one in comparing this scheme with Habermas's is that normatively structured social relations are, as a matter of course, construed as relations of power. Earlier, when rules and norms constitutive of rational practices were regarded simply as technologies for "governing" and "normalizing" individuals, this is what one would have expected. But now we have to ask what has been accomplished by distinguishing the three ontological dimensions if we are still left with a reduction of social relations to power relations. Part of the answer, I think, is a

shift of attention from relations of domination to strategic relations. I want to suggest, in fact, that Foucault's final ontology tends to equate social interaction with strategic interaction, precisely the equation Habermas seeks to block with his concept of communicative action.

The most elaborate explication of his later notion of power appears in Foucault's afterword to the first edition of the Dreyfus and Rabinow study. There he construes the exercise of power as "a way in which certain actions modify others," a "mode of action upon the action of others," which "structures[s] the possible field of [their] action."[44] The relationship proper to power is neither violence nor consensus but "government," in the very broad sense of "guiding the possibility of conduct and putting in order the possible outcome."[45] Viewed in this way, says Foucault, power is "coextensive with every social relationship,"[46] for "to live in society is to live in such a way that action upon other actions is possible and in fact ongoing."[47]

Foucault's matter-of-course treatment of social relations as power relations is less startling once we realize that he now defines power relations in terms not unlike those that the sociological tradition has used to define social relations. What makes actions social is precisely the possibility of their influencing and being influenced by the actions and expectations of others. On Foucault's definition, only actions that had no possible effects on the actions of others, that is, which were not social, would be free of the exercise of power. What is at stake here? Is this merely a rhetorical twist meant to sharpen our awareness of the ways in which our possibilities of action are structured and circumscribed by the actions of others? In part, perhaps, but there is also a metatheoretical issue involved. His conceptualization of social interaction privileges strategic over consensual modes of "guiding the possibility of conduct and putting in order the possible outcomes."

To see how this is so, we must first take a brief look at his distinction between power and domination. Whereas earlier, situations of domination — asylums, clinics, prisons, bureaucracies, and the like — were treated as paradigms of power relations generally in the panoptical society, now they are clearly marked off as a particular type of power situation.

When one speaks of "power", people think immediately of a political structure, a government, a dominant social class, the master facing the slave, and so on. That is not at all what I think when I speak of "relationships of power." I mean that in human relations, whatever they are — whether it be a question of communicating verbally . . . or a question of a love relationship, an institutional or economic relationship — power is always present: I mean the relationships in which one wants to direct the behavior of another. . . . These relations of power are changeable, reversible, and understandable. . . . Now there are effectively states of domination. In many cases, the relations of power are fixed in such a way that they are perpetually asymmetrical and the margin of liberty is extremely limited.[48]

Thus Foucault now distinguishes "relationships of power as strategic games between liberties" in which "some people try to determine the conduct of others" from "the states of domination . . . we ordinarily call power."[49] The idea of a society without power relations is nonsense, whereas the reduction to a minimum of states of domination — that is, fixed, asymmetrical, irreversible relations of power — is a meaningful political goal. "Power is not an evil. Power is strategic games. . . . To exercise power over another in a sort of open strategic game, where things could be reversed, that is not evil. . . . The problem is rather to know how to avoid . . . the effects of domination."[50] In short, whereas "games of domination" are legitimate targets of political struggle aimed at freeing up space for open strategic games. "The more open the game, the more attractive and fascinating it is."[51]

It is difficult to judge just how far Foucault would have been willing to take this line of thought. It leads in the end to conceptualizing social relations as strategic relations and social interaction as strategic interaction. It would be ironic indeed if his wholesale critique of modern social theory should finally end in an embrace of one of its hoarier forms.[52] But rather than rehearsing the familiar debates concerning game-theoretical approaches to the general theory of action, I shall remark only on one key issue that separates Foucault from Habermas.

There are, at least on the face of it, ways of influencing the conduct of others that do not fit very neatly into the model of strategic games. Habermas's notion of communicative action singles out for attention the openly intended illocutionary effects that speech acts may have

on the actions of others.[53] Establishing relations through the exchange of illocutionary acts make it possible for speakers and hearers to achieve mutual understanding about their courses of action, that is, to cooperate rather than compete in important areas of life. Foucault, however, views even the consensus that results from raising and accepting validity claims — claims to truth, rightness, sincerity, and so forth — as an instrument or result of the exercise of power.[54] Though he avoids any direct reduction of validity to power in his later work, his definition of power ensures that every communication produces it: "Relationships of communication," he writes, "produce effects of power" by "modifying the field of information between parties."[55] Of course, if producing effects of power amounts to no more than influencing the conduct of others, we have here a sheep in wolf's clothing. Habermas's notion of noncoercive discourse was never intended to refer to communication that is without effect on the behavior of others! Foucault comes closer to what is at issue between them when, in an apparent allusion to Habermas, he criticizes the idea of dissolving relations of power in a "utopia of a perfectly transparent communication."[56] He elaborates on this as follows: "The thought that there could be a state of communication which would be such that the games of truth could circulate freely, without obstacles, without constraint, and without coercive effects, seems to me to be Utopia."[57] This takes us back to the discussion of rational practices in section 2 and particularly to the idea that "truth is produced by virtue of multiple forms of constraint." As we saw there, the issue cannot be whether there are "games of truth" without the constraints of rules, procedures, criteria, and the like. And it does not seem to be whether constitutive constraints could *possibly* obligate participants in a symmetrical and reciprocal manner.[58] So the question appears to be whether what Habermas calls communication free from domination, in which claims to validity are decided on the basis of the reasons offered for and against them, can actually be realized in practice. And that seems to be a matter of more or less rather than all or nothing. If so, Habermas's idea of rational discourse would make as much sense as a *normative ideal* as Foucault's notion of a level playing field. It would be utopian only in the sense that the full realization of any regulative idea is utopian.

The Subject Again: Autonomy and Care of the Self

Foucault's growing emphasis on the "strategic side" of the "practical systems" that organize our ways of doing things — the freedom we have to act within, upon, or against them — is not the only way the individual comes to the fore in his later thought.[59] His balancing of the "technological" with the "strategic" in conceptualizing power is accompanied by a shift of attention from "subjectification" via "individualizing power" to "self-formation" via "care of the self." This shift occurred between the publication of volume 1 of the *History of Sexuality* in 1976 and the publication of volumes 2 and 3 in 1984. As Foucault explains it, earlier in *Discipline and Punish* and similar writings he had been concerned with "techniques for 'governing' individuals" in different areas of life. When he turned his attention to the genealogy of the modern subject in the *History of Sexuality,* there was a danger of "reproducing, with regard to sexuality, forms of analysis focused on the organization of a domain of learning or on the techniques of control and coercion, as in [his] previous work on sickness and criminality."[60] And this is indeed what we find happening prior to his work in volumes 2 and 3. In volume 1 he could still describe the aim of his study as follows: "The object, in short, is to define the regime of power-knowledge-pleasure that sustains the discourse on human sexuality in our part of the world. . . . My main concern will be to locate the forms of power, the channels it takes, and the discourses it permeates in order to reach the most tenuous and individual mode of behavior."[61] In the Tanner Lectures delivered at Stanford three years later (1979), one still finds a treatment of individuality in relation to "individualizing power", that is, to "power techniques oriented toward individuals and intended to rule them in a continuous and permanent way."[62] What Foucault calls "pastoral techniques," from Christian examination of conscience and cure of the soul to contemporary methods of mental health, are analyzed there as instruments for "governing individuals by their own verity."[63] And "governmentality" apparently continued to serve as the general perspective on individualization in the years immediately following.[64]

By 1983, however, the perspective had clearly shifted. In an interview conducted by Dreyfus and Rabinow in April of that year, Foucault, hard at work on the later volumes of his *History of Sexuality,*

announces that "sex is boring" and that he is interested rather in techniques of the self.[65] Clarifying that remark, he goes on to draw a clear distinction between technologies of the self geared to normalization and ethical techniques aimed at living a beautiful life.[66] What the Greeks were after, he says, is an aesthetics of existence: "The problem for them was 'the *techne* of life,' . . . how to live . . . as well as [one] ought to live," and that, he tells us, is his interest as well: "The idea of the bios as material for an aesthetic piece of art is something which fascinates me."[67] Accordingly, he now characterizes the third axis of genealogical-archaeological analysis as directed not toward modes of normalizing subjectification but toward "the kind of relationship you ought to have with yourself, *rapport à soi,* which I call ethics, and which determines how the individual is supposed to conduct himself as a moral subject of his own action."[68] Elsewhere this is described as a shift from the investigation of "coercive practices" to the study of "practices of freedom," "exercises of self upon self by which one tries . . . to transform one's self and to attain a certain mode of being."[69] And this "care of the self," which establishes a form of self-mastery, is now said to be a sine qua non of properly caring for others, that is, of the art of governing.[70]

According to Foucault, the search for an ethic of existence that was stressed in antiquity differed fundamentally from the obedience to a system of rules that came to prevail in Christianity. "The elaboration of one's own life as a personal work of art, even if it obeyed certain collective canons, was at the center, it seems to me, of moral experience, of the will to morality in Antiquity; whereas in Christianity, with the religion of the text, the idea of the Will of God, and the principle of obedience, morality took on increasingly the form of a code of rules."[71] To be sure, there are "code elements" and "elements of ascesis" in every morality, prescriptive ensembles of rules and values as well as ways in which individuals are to form themselves as ethical subjects in relation to those rules and values.[72]

Nevertheless, some moralities are more "code oriented," and others more "ethics oriented." In the former the accent is on code, authority, and punishment, and "subjectivation occurs basically in a quasi-juridical form, where the ethical subject refers his conduct to a law, or set of laws, to which he must submit."[73] In the latter the main emphasis is on self-formative processes that enable individuals

to escape enslavement to their appetites and passions and to achieve a desired mode of being, and "the system of code and rules of behavior may be rather rudimentary [and] their exact observance may be relatively unimportant, at least compared with what is required of the individual in the relationship he has with himself."[74] Whereas histories of morality have usually focused on the different systems of rules and values operative in different societies or groups or on the extent to which the actual behavior of different individuals or groups were in conformity with such prescriptive ensembles, Foucault's *History of Sexuality* focuses on the different ways in which "individuals have been urged to constitute themselves as subjects of moral conduct," on the different "forms of moral subjectivation and the practices of the self that are meant to ensure it."[75] This choice is motivated in part by his diagnosis of the present state of morality: "If I was interested in Antiquity it was because, for a whole series of reasons, the idea of morality as disobedience to a code of rules is now disappearing, has already disappeared. And to this absence of morality corresponds, must correspond, the search for an aesthetics of existence."[76] Thus the problem of our present and of our present selves to which Foucault's later work is oriented is the "ethopoetic" one of how to revive and renew "the arts of individual existence."

This certainly constitutes a major shift from his earlier emphasis on networks or fields of power, in which individuals were only nodal points, and his methodological injunction to do without the subject and modes of analysis that rely on it. Both the ethical subject and the strategic subject are now represented as acting intentionally and voluntarily — within, to be sure, cultural and institutional systems that organize their ways of doing things.[77] But they are not simply points of application of these practical systems; they can critically-reflectively detach themselves from these systems; they can, within limits, modify these systems; they can, in any case, make creative use of whatever space for formation of the self that these systems permit or provide. This model now enables us to make sense of the possibilities of resistance and revolt that, Foucault always insisted, are inherent in systems of power. It corrects the holistic bias we found in his work of the 1970s. The question now is whether he hasn't gone too far in the opposite direction and replaced it with an individualistic bias.

Though the later Foucault refers appreciatively to Kant's ideas of maturity and autonomy, he gives them a very different twist. For example, in "What Is Enlightenment?" his analysis of Kant's notion of *Mündigkeit* is immediately followed by a discussion of Baudelaire's attitude toward modernity: "Modern man, for Baudelaire, is not the man who goes off to discover himself, his secrets, his hidden truth; he is the man who tries to invent himself. This modernity does not 'liberate man in his own being': it compels him to face the task of producing himself."[78] In this respect, Baudelaire's attitude is Foucault's own, but it is not Kant's.[79] The representation of autonomy as aesthetic self-invention eliminates the universality at the heart of his notion, the rational *Wille* expressed in norms binding on all agents alike. This is, of course, no oversight on Foucault's part. As we saw, he distinguishes code-oriented moralities, in which a quasi-juridical subject refers his or her conduct to a set of laws, from ethics-oriented moralities, in which general rules of behavior are less developed and less important than individual self-formation. There can be no doubts as to how he ranks them: "The search for styles of existence as different from each other as possible seems to me to be one of the points on which particular groups in the past may have inaugurated searches we are engaged in today. The search for a form of morality acceptable to everybody, in the sense that everybody should submit to it, strikes me as catastrophic."[80] In the context of his history of sexuality, it is Christianity that serves as the paradigm of a code-oriented morality: "The Church and the pastoral ministry shared the principle of a morality whose precepts were compulsory and whose code was universal."[81] And this, it seems to me, is what motivates the either/or approach expressed in the lines quoted above: universal morality is construed not formally but materially, that is, in a pre-Kantian manner.

Contemporary neo-Kantians treat justice and the good life as complementary and not opposed concerns. Thus Habermas differentiates the type of practical reasoning proper to questions of what is morally right from that concerned with what is ethically prudent.[82] If questions of justice are involved, fair and impartial consideration of conflicting interests is called for; when questions of value arise, deliberation on who one is and who one wants to be is central. Like Kant, Habermas regards matters of justice, rather than matters spe-

cifically of the good life or of individual self-realization, to be the proper domain of universal morality. This is not to say that ethical deliberation exhibits no general structures of its own, but the disappearance of value-imbued cosmologies and the disintegration of sacred canopies have opened the question of how should I (or we or one) live to the irreducible pluralism and individualism of modern life. To suppose that it could be answered once and for all, that moral theory could single out one form of life right for everyone, is no longer plausible. On that point Habermas agrees with Foucault. For Habermas, however, this does not eliminate the need for a general theory of a more restricted sort: a theory of justice that reconstructs the moral point of view from which competing interest- and value-based claims can be fairly adjudicated. Like Kant, Habermas understands this type of reasoning to be universal in import; however, he replaces the categorical imperative with the idea that for general norms to be valid they have to be acceptable to all those affected by them as participants in practical discourse.

I cannot go into the details of that approach here, but enough has been said, perhaps, to indicate that Foucault's representation of universal morality, geared as it is to substantive codes, misses the point of formal, procedural models, namely to establish a general framework of justice within which individuals and groups may pursue different conceptions of the good or beautiful life. Although Foucault does not address himself to this most general level of morality, he too cannot do without it. When asked on one occasion if the Greek arts of existence present a viable alternative to contemporary conceptions of the moral life, he responded, "The Greek ethics were linked to a purely virile society with slaves, in which the women were underdogs whose pleasure had no importance."[83] That is to say, Greek ethics were tied to unjust practices and institutions. And when asked on another occasion whether consensus might not serve as a regulative principle in structuring social relations, he replied, "I would say, rather, that it is perhaps a critical idea to maintain at all times: to ask oneself what proportion of non-consensuality is implied in such a power relation, and whether that degree of non-consensuality is necessary or not, and then one may question every power relation to that extent. The farthest I would go is to say that perhaps one must not be for consensuality, but one must be against non-

consensuality."[84] And as we have seen, Foucault proposes as a goal for political practice the transformation of states of domination into open and symmetric (fair?) strategic games. In these and other contexts it is clear that Foucault conceives the "elaboration of one's life as a personal work of art" to be limited by considerations of justice. That is the unmistakable orientation of his studies, and it is an orientation that calls for *its own* reflective elaboration: universal morality is not opposed but complementary to the search for a personal ethics, if that search is to be open to everyone.

The problems with Foucault's account of the practice of liberty stem from his antithetical conceptualization of individual freedom and social interaction. As any operation of the other upon the self is conceived to be an exercise of power in which the other governs my conduct, gets me to do what he or she wants, liberty can consist only in operations of the self upon the self in which one governs or shapes one's own conduct. The one-dimensional view of social interaction as strategic interaction displaces autonomy outside of the social network. There are, of course, post-Kantian alternatives to this in which individual freedom includes reasoned agreement to the norms of common life, individual identity is formed and maintained in reciprocal relations with others, and group memberships contribute to self-fulfillment. Foucault's aesthetic individualism is no more adequate to this social dimension of autonomy than was the possessive individualism of early modern political theory. The same problem turns up in a different form in his views on the relation of ethics to politics and society: "The idea that ethics can be a very strong structure of existence, without any relation to the juridical per se, to an authoritarian system, a disciplinary structure, is very interesting," he tells us.[85] "For centuries," he continues, "we have been convinced that between our ethos, our personal ethics, our everyday life, and the great political and social and economic structures there were analytic relations, and that we couldn't change anything, for instance, in our sex life or in our family life, without ruining our economy, our democracy and so on. I think we have to get rid of this idea of an analytical or necessary link between this and other social or economic or political structures."[86] And a bit further on he asks rhetorically, "But couldn't everyone's life become a work of art?"[87] In his earlier work Foucault himself gave us ample grounds for answering

that question in the negative under existing social, economic, and political conditions. The problem is not with "analytic and necessary links" but with de facto empirical interdependencies between structures and events at the personal and societal levels. The existence of such interconnections does not, of course, mean that we cannot change anything in our individual lives without changing society as a whole. But it does mean that the conditions of individual existence, and thus the chances of making one's life into a work of art, are different at different locations in the social system. As Hans-Herbert Kögler puts it, "The sociocultural resources and opportunities for developing an autonomous personality are inequitably distributed, and this cannot be evened out by an ethical choice of self. . . . That approach leaves fully unanswered the question of how we might criticize contexts that themselves render impossible [autonomous] modes of subjectivation."[88]

Viewed from the perspective of critical social theory, Foucault's later framework of interpretation lies at the opposite extreme from his earlier social ontology of power. Then everything was a function of context, of impersonal forces and fields, from which there was no escape — the end of man. Now the focus is on "those intentional and voluntary actions by which men not only set themselves rules of conduct but also seek to transform themselves . . . and to make their life into an *œuvre*" — with too little regard for social, political, and economic context.[89] Neither scheme provides an adequate framework for critical social inquiry. The ontology of power was too reductive and one-dimensional for that purpose; the later, multidimensional ontology still depicts social relations as strategic and thus forces the search for autonomy, so central to the critical tradition, onto the private path of a *rapport à soi*. This is not at all to deny the power and insight of Foucault's historical-critical studies; it is to question his own accounts of their presuppositions and implications. I have been arguing that his work is better understood as a continuation and enrichment of the critical-theoretical tradition. His strengths are often weaknesses of mainstream critical social theory; his nominalism, descriptivism, and historicism a counterweight to the usual emphasis on the general, the normative, and the theoretical. However universal critical theory may be at the level of concepts and principles, in pursuing its practical interests, it must finally reach the

variable, contingent, "transformable singularities" that so occupied Foucault and made his work so powerful a factor in the contemporary politics of identity. In this regard, his investigations into the historical contexts in which specific "practical systems" arise and function and his studies of the formation of the moral-rational subject are a valuable complement to more global discourses about rationalization. Moreover, his relentless scrutinizing of the impositions, constraints, and hierarchies that figure in rational practices challenges critical theorists to go further than they have in detranscendentalizing their guiding conceptions of reason, truth, and freedom.

In shaping his approach, Foucault devoted himself single-mindedly to matters about which he cared a great deal. Too often his single-mindedness found expression in an either/or stance toward existing frameworks and modes of critical inquiry. I have tried to suggest that the strengths of genealogy are better viewed as complementary to those of classical critical theory. The point is not to choose between them but to combine them in constructing theoretically informed and practically interested histories of the present.

Notes

1. See Horkheimer's inaugural lecture (1931) as director of the Institut für Sozialforschung, "The State of Contemporary Social Philosophy and the Tasks of an Institute for Social Research," in S. Bronner and D. Kellner, eds., *Critical Theory and Society* (New York, 1989), pp. 25–36, and his contributions to the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* from the early 1930s, some of which have been collected in Horkheimer, *Critical Theory* (New York, 1972) and Horkheimer, *Between Philosophy and Social Science: Selected Early Writings* (Cambridge, Mass., 1993). Habermas's renewal of this program is elaborated in *The Theory of Communicative Action,* vols. 1 and 2 (Boston, 1984, 1987). The comparison that follows would look quite different if its reference point were the version of critical theory developed by Horkheimer and Adorno in the 1940s, particularly in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York, 1972), which is very close in spirit to the genealogy of power/knowledge that Foucault practiced in the 1970s. That period of Foucault's work, by far the most influential in the English-speaking world, is the other point of reference for the comparison in this section. The ethic of the self, which he developed in the 1980s, will be discussed in section 3. I will not be dealing with the first phase(s) of his thought, which came to a close around 1970–1971 with the appearance of "The Discourse on Language" (printed as an appendix to *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* New York, 1972, pp. 215–237), and

"Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" (in *Language, Counter-memory, Practice,* Ithaca, 1977, pp. 139–164).

2. The early Horkheimer also appealed to a speculative philosophy of history.

3. The differences are as great among the various members of the Frankfurt school at the various stages of their careers.

4. M. Foucault, "Questions of Method," in K. Baynes, J. Bohman, and T. McCarthy, eds., *After Philosophy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1987), pp. 100–117, here p. 112.

5. M. Foucault, "Truth and Power," in Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* (New York, 1980), pp. 109–133, here p. 131.

6. The application of sociological and ethnographic approaches to the natural sciences has led to similar conclusions.

7. "Truth and Power," p. 131.

8. M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (New York, 1978), pp. 27–28.

9. See J. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Boston, 1971). For his elaboration of the ideas that follow, see *The Theory of Communicative Action,* vol. 2.

10. He seems later to have adopted a more positive attitude toward hermeneutics when that was called for by his desire to appropriate — rather than merely to objectivate — Greek and Roman texts on the care of the self. In a note on page 7 of *The History of Sexuality,* vol. 2, *The Use of Pleasure* (New York, 1985), he characterizes his approach in classically hermeneutic terms: "to examine both the difference that keeps us at a remove from a way of thinking in which we recognize the origin of our own, and the proximity that remains in spite of that distance which we never cease to explore."

11. M. Foucault, "Truth and Power," p. 119.

12. *Discipline and Punish,* p. 114.

13. "Truth and Power," p. 131.

14. See Harold Garfinkel, *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (Cambridge, 1984).

15. N. Fraser, "Foucault on Modern Power: Empirical Insights and Normative Confusions," in Fraser, *Unruly Practices* (Minneapolis, 1989), pp. 17–34, here p. 32.

16. "Truth and Power," p. 116.

17. The quote is from "Truth and Power," p. 114.

18. "Two Lectures," in *Power/Knowledge,* pp. 78–108, here p. 98.

19. "Two Lectures," p. 98.

20. See "Truth and Power," p. 117.

21. "Two Lectures," p. 97.

22. See Erving Goffman, *Asylums* (New York, 1961).

23. See John Heritage, *Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 103–134.

24. See, for instance, *The History of Sexuality,* vol. 1 (New York, 1978), pp. 95–96.

25. See *The History of Sexuality,* vol. 1, p. 157.

26. For a discussion of this problem, see David Michael Levin, *The Listening Self* (London and New York, 1989), pp. 90 ff.

27. Charles Taylor, "Foucault on Freedom and Truth," in David Hoy, ed., *Foucault: A Critical Reader* (Oxford, New York, 1986), pp. 69–102, here pp. 91–93.

28. A revised version of part of the lecture was published as "The Art of Telling the Truth," in Michel Foucault, *Politics, Philosophy, Culture* (New York, 1988), pp. 86–95, here p. 95. Foucault sometimes writes as if the analytic of truth in general — that is, the traditional concerns with knowledge, truth, reality, human nature, and the like — should be abandoned as a lost, but still dangerous, cause. At other times he represents it as a still viable research orientation, which, however, he chooses not to pursue. See, for example, "The Political Technology of Individuals," in L. H. Martin, H. Gutman, and P. H. Hutton, eds., *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault* (Amherst, 1988), pp. 145–162, here p. 145. In either case, the fact he pursues his "ontology of the present and of ourselves" in separation from any (explicit) "analytic of truth" constitutes a major difference from Habermas, whose diagnosis of the present is linked to a continuation of the critical project Kant inaugurated with his three *Critiques.* I shall not be able to explore that difference here.

29. In emphasizing the changes in Foucault's self-understanding in the 1980s, I am taking issue with commentators who stress the continuity with earlier work, often by treating Foucault's later *redescriptions* of it as accurate accounts of what he was "really" up to at the time. The frequent (and varied) redescriptions he offers are, in my view, better read as *retrospectives* from newly achieved points of view. Foucault himself was often quite open about the changes. See, for instance, the three interviews conducted in January, May, and June of 1984: "The Ethic of Care for the Self as a Practice of Freedom," in *The Final Foucault,* James Bernauer and David Rasmussen, eds. (Cambridge, Mass., 1988), pp. 1–20; "The Concern for Truth," in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture,* pp. 255–267 (on p. 255 he says "I changed my mind" after the publication of volume 1 of *The History of Sexuality*); and "The Return of Morality," in *Philosophy, Politics, Culture,* pp. 242–

254 (where he says essentially the same thing on pp. 252–253). Among his published writings, see, for instance, the introduction to vol. 2 of *The History of Sexuality*, especially "Modifications," pp. 3–13. I find this straightforward acknowledgement of a theoretical shift hermeneutically more satisfactory than any of the attempts to read his earlier work as if it had been written from the perspective of the 1980s. For an overview of the development of Foucault's thought and the distinctive features of the last phase, see Hans-Herberg Kögler, "Fröhliche Subjektivität: Historische Ethik und dreifache Ontologie beim späten Foucault," forthcoming in E. Erdmann, R. Forst, A. Honneth, eds., *Ethos der Moderne — Foucaults Kritik der Aufklärung* (Frankfurt, 1990). For a somewhat different view, see Arnold I. Davidson, "Archeology, Genealogy, Ethics," in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, pp. 221–233.

30. Translated as "What Is Enlightenment?" in Lewis White Beck, ed., *Kant on History* (New York, 1963), pp. 3–11. Foucault's fullest treatment can be found in a posthumously published text with the same title in Paul Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader* (New York, 1984), pp. 32–50. In the 1980s he repeatedly expressed his appreciation of Kant's essay. In addition to text just cited, see his afterword to Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago, 1982), "The Subject and Power," pp. 145–162, here p. 145, and "Structuralism and Poststructuralism: An Interview with Michel Foucault," *Telos* 55 (1983): 195–211, here pp. 119, 206.

31. "The Subject and Power," p. 216.

32. "Polemics, Politics, and Problematizations," in *The Foucault Reader*, pp. 381–390, here p. 388. Compare Foucault's remark in the introduction to volume 2 of the *History of Sexuality* that the object of those studies is "to learn to what extent the effort to think one's own history can free thought from what it silently thinks, and so enable it to think differently" (p. 9).

33. "The Ethic of Care for the Self as a Practice of Freedom," p. 4.

34. The concept of mature adulthood (Kant's *Mündigkeit*) is discussed in "What Is Enlightenment?" pp. 34–35 and 39. Dreyfus and Rabinow deal with this topic in "What Is Maturity? Habermas and Foucault on 'What Is Enlightenment?'" in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, pp. 109–121. But their representation of Habermas's position is misleading on key points, e.g., as regards his views on "*phronesis*, art, and rhetoric" (p. 111), on authenticity (p. 112), and on reaching agreement (pp. 119–120).

35. "What Is Enlightenment?" p. 42. See also "The Art of Telling the Truth," pp. 94–95.

36. "Space, Knowledge, and Power," in *The Foucault Reader*, pp. 239–256, here p. 249.

37. "What Is Enlightenment?" pp. 45–96. Foucault sometimes takes a line closer to Habermas, for instance when he explains that "singular forms of experience may perfectly well harbor universal structures," in the original preface to *The History of Sexuality,* volume 2, in *The Foucault Reader,* pp. 333–339, here p. 335. But characteristically, he immediately goes on to say that *his* type of historical analysis brings to light not universal structures but "transformable singularities" (p. 335). As we saw in section 2, it nevertheless relies on an interpretive and analytic framework comprising universalist assumptions about the structure of social action. As I shall elaborate below, the same holds for his later investigations as well, but the framework has been altered in important respects.

38. The quotes are from "What Is Enlightenment?" p. 48.

39. "What Is Enlightenment?" p. 43. Foucault explicitly gives preference to "specific" and "partial" transformations over "all projects that claim to be global or radical" and "any programs for a new man" (pp. 46–47). Compare Habermas's remarks in *Knowledge and Human Interests,* pp. 284–285. There are many similarities between the Foucault of "What Is Enlightenment?" and the earlier Habermas, who pursued "an empirical theory of history with a practical intent." See my account of this phase of Habermas's thought in *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), chapters 1, 2, and 3.

40. "Truth and Subjectivity," manuscript, p. 7. Foucault is apparently referring to the scheme Habermas proposed in his inaugural lecture at Frankfurt University in 1965 (printed as the appendix to *Knowledge and Human Interests,* pp. 301–317) and subsequently altered. On Page 313 Habermas characterized his three dimensions of analysis as labor, language, and domination (*Herrschaft*).

41. *Technologies of the Self,* pp. 18–19. It is clear, however, that Foucault has not yet fully disengaged from the ontology of power, for all four types of technologies are said to be "associated with" domination, and he characterizes his new field of interest as "the technologies of individual domination." See note 64 below.

42. "The Subject and Power," pp. 217–218.

43. *The Use of Pleasure,* p. 4. A version of this already appears in Foucault's discussions with Dreyfus and Rabinow at Berkeley in April 1983: "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress," in *The Foucault Reader,* pp. 340–372, here pp. 351–352. It is elaborated in the original preface to volume 2, pp. 333–339, as a distinction between fields of study, sets of rules, and relations to self.

44. "The Subject and Power," pp. 219, 221.

45. "The Subject and Power," p. 221.

46. "The Subject and Power," p. 224.

47. "The Subject and Power," p. 222.

48. "The Ethic of Care for the Self as a Practice of Freedom," pp. 11–12. This interview, conducted in January 1984, was twice reworked and edited by Foucault before he authorized its publication. The formulations that appear are thus no mere accidents of the occasion. See *Freiheit und Selbsorge,* H. Becker et al., eds. (Frankfurt, 1985), pp. 7, 9.

49. "The Ethic of Care for the Self," p. 19. The categories of power, domination, and strategy are of course used earlier as well, but not with the same meanings. In volume 1 of *The History of Sexuality,* for instance, "states of power" are said to be generated by virtue of the *inequality* of force relations (p. 93), and power is said to be exercised in *nonegalitarian* relations (p. 94); "major dominations" arise as the hegemonic effects of wide-ranging cleavages that run through the social body as a whole (p. 94), while strategies are embodiments of force relations (p. 93, with example on pp. 104–5).

50. "The Ethic of Care for the Self," p. 18.

51. "The Ethic of Care for the Self," p. 20.

52. Foucault's three-part definition of "strategy" in "The Subject and Power," pp. 224–225, is conventional enough. It is said to designate means-ends rationality aimed at achieving some objective, playing a game with a view to gaining one's own advantage, and the means to victory over opponents in situations of confrontation.

53. See "What Is Universal Pragmatics?" in Habermas, *Communication and the Evolution of Society* (Boston, 1979), pp. 1–68, esp. pp. 59–65, and *The Theory of Communicative Action,* vol. 1, pp. 273–337.

54. See "The Subject and Power," p. 220.

55. "The Subject and Power," p. 218.

56. "The Ethic of Care for the Self," p. 18.

57. "The Ethic of Care for the Self," p. 18.

58. See Foucault's discussion of the "morality that concerns the search for truth" in "Polemics, Politics, and Problematizations," pp. 381–382, where he describes what are essentially symmetry conditions among dialogue partners. See also his account of the role that communication with others has played in the care of the self in *The History of Sexuality,* volume 3, pp. 51–54. The reciprocity of helping and being helped by others that he describes there hardly accords with his official view of social relations as strategic relations.

59. Foucault draws a distinction between the "strategic" and "technological" sides of "practical systems" in, for instance, "What Is Enlightenment?" p. 48.

60. The original preface to *The History of Sexuality,* vol. 2, pp. 337–339.

61. *The History of Sexuality,* vol. 1, p. 11.

62. "Omnes et Singulatim: Towards a Criticism of Political Reason," in *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values,* vol. 2, Sterling McMurrin, ed. (Salt Lake City, 1981), pp. 225–254, here p. 227.

63. "Omnes et Singulatim," p. 240.

64. For example, in his Howison Lectures delivered at Berkeley the next fall (1980), he describes his project as an investigation of the historical constitution of the subject that leads to the modern concept of the self ("Truth and Subjectivity," manuscript, lecture 1, p. 4), and goes on to say that he is focusing on "techniques of the self" by which "individuals effect a certain number of operations on their own bodies, on their souls, on their own thoughts, on their conduct." But though he clearly distinguishes such techniques from "techniques of domination," they have to be understood precisely in relation to them (p. 7). The "point of contact" between the two is government: "When I was studying asylums, prisons, and so on, I insisted too much on the techniques of domination. . . . But that is only one aspect of the art of governing people in our societies. . . . [Power] is due to the subtle integration of coercion technologies and self technologies. . . . Among [the latter], those oriented toward the discovery and formulation of the truth concerning oneself are extremely important." Accordingly, in the closing passage of his lectures he asks rhetorically whether the time has not come to get rid of these technologies and the sacrifices linked to them (lecture 2, p. 20). In the first part of "The Subject and Power" (pp. 208–216), which was delivered as a lecture at the University of Southern California the following fall (1981), the way in which we turn ourselves into subjects is described as an element in the "government of individualization" (p. 212). At the same time, however, Foucault notes the increasing importance of struggles against "forms of subjection" exercised through "individualizing techniques" (p. 213), the shaping of individuals to ensure their integration into the modern state (p. 214). And he concludes with a line that could serve as the epigraph of his last studies: "The political, ethical, social, philosophical problem of our days is not to try to liberate the individual from the state and from the state's institutions, but to liberate us both from the state and from the type of individualization which is linked to the state. We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries" (p. 216). In an outline of his 1980/1981 course at the Collège de France, "Subjectivité et vérité" which dealt with the materials of the final volumes of *The History of Sexuality,* Foucault locates the care of the self at the crossroads of the history of subjectivity and the analysis of forms of governmentality. Studying its history enables him "to take up again the question of 'governmentality' from a new point of view: the government of self by self in its

articulation with relations to others" (M. Foucault, "Résumé des cours, 1970–82," Paris, 1989, pp. 134–136).

65. "On the Genealogy of Ethics," p. 340. The subordination of his interest in sexuality as such to a broader problematization of techniques of forming the self is clearly stated in those volumes. It is, he writes, with sexual behavior as a "domain of valuation and choice," with the ways in which "the individual is summoned to recognize himself as an ethical subject of sexual conduct" that the later studies are concerned (vol. 2, p. 32). Thus his analyses of "prescriptive discourses" about dietetics, household management, erotics, and so forth focus on the modes of subjectivation presupposed and nourished in the corresponding practices. Very briefly, the genealogy of desiring man as a self-disciplined subject is Foucault's key to the genealogy of the subject of ethical conduct (vol. 2, pp. 250–251), and this is itself an element in a more comprehensive "history of truth" (vol. 2, p. 6). Similarly, in analyzing *parrhēsia,* or truth-telling, in antiquity, Foucault conceives of the genealogy of the parrhesiastic subject, the truth teller, as part of the "genealogy of the critical attitude in Western philosophy" (*Discourse and Truth: The Problematization of Parrhēsia,* a transcription by Joseph Pearson of a seminar given at the University of California, Berkeley, in the fall of 1983, p. 114). These connections suggest the continuing relevance of Foucault's work to what I referred to as the critique of impure reason.

66. "On the Genealogy of Ethics," p. 341.

67. "On the Genealogy of Ethics," p. 348.

68. "On the Genealogy of Ethics," p. 352.

69. "The Ethic of Care for the Self," pp. 2–3.

70. "The Ethic of Care for the Self," pp. 6–7. The connections between governmentality, care of the self, and strategic interaction are suggested on pp. 19–20 of the same interview: "In the idea of governmentality I am aiming at the totality of practices by which one can constitute, define, organize, instrumentalize the strategies which individuals in their liberty can have in regard to each other. It is free individuals who try to control, to determine, to delimit the liberty of others, and in order to do that, they dispose of certain instruments to govern others. That rests indeed on freedom, on the relationship of the self to self and the relationship to the other." On the relation between self-mastery and the mastery of others in antiquity, see *The History of Sexuality,* vol. 2, pp. 73ff.

71. "An Aesthetics of Existence," in *Philosophy, Politics, Culture,* pp. 47–53, here p. 49. Foucault's later studies abound in comparisons between ethical practices in antiquity and in Christianity. See, for example, *The History of Sexuality,* vol. 2, pp. 92, 136–139, and vol. 3, pp. 68, 140ff., 165, 235ff. These comparisons, so patently unfavorable to Christianity, bespeak Foucault's own commitment to an ethopoetics of existence. In my view, an analysis of the evaluative presuppositions

underlying Foucault's last works, which are ostensibly constructed in a nonevaluative, descriptive mode, would reveal them to be more or less the ones he openly espoused in the lectures, interviews, and methodological asides of the last period. In neither phase should the absence of explicit value *judgments* in his sociohistorical studies obscure the presence of implicit value *orientations* underlying them. (Compare Weber's distinction between *Werturteile* and *Wertbeziehungen.*) But the large gap between the avowed and the actually operative frameworks of evaluation in the 1970s was considerably closed in the 1980s.

72. *The History of Sexuality,* vol. 2, pp. 25–26.

73. *The History of Sexuality,* vol. 2, p. 29.

74. *The History of Sexuality,* vol. 2, p. 30.

75. *The History of Sexuality,* vol. 2, p. 29.

76. "An Aesthetics of Existence," p. 49. See also "On the Genealogy of Ethics," p. 343, and "The Concern for Truth," pp. 262–263.

77. *The History of Sexuality,* vol. 2, p.10.

78. "What Is Enlightenment?" p. 42.

79. Nor, for that matter, is it Socrates', Plato's, or Aristotle's. There is more than one way to take issue with Foucault's notion of an ethics of self-invention. I will be stressing Kant's connection of autonomy to a rational will, but problems could also be raised from the standpoint for the ethics of community, character, virtue, and the like.

80. "The Concern for Truth," p. 253.

81. *The History of Sexuality,* vol. 2, p. 21.

82. See his *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990) and *The Theory of Communicative Action,* vol. 2, pp. 92–111.

83. "On the Genealogy of Ethics," p. 44. The masculinist and dominative orientation of Greek ethics is stressed throughout volume 2 of *The History of Sexuality.* See, for example, pp. 69–77, 82–86, 146–151, and 215–225.

84. "Politics and Ethics: An Interview," in *The Foucault Reader,* pp. 373–380, here p. 379.

85. "On the Genealogy of Ethics," p. 348.

86. "On the Genealogy of Ethics," p. 350.

87. "On the Genealogy of Ethics," p. 350.

88. "Fröhliche Subjektivität," manuscript, p. 29.

89. *The Use of Pleasure,* p. 10. To be sure, the studies of self-formative processes in volumes 2 and 3 of *The History of Sexuality* do view classical practices of the self in their sociocultural contexts. But Foucault is himself opposed to the shaping of individuals to fit societal contexts, be it the Greek polis or the modern state. As he conceives it, the practice of the self is a practice of liberty precisely insofar as it frees formation of the self from such functional contexts. The question of whether this is compatible with any type of social order is left largely open, as is that of the new types of community to which it could give rise. These are, of course, very important questions for *social* movements struggling to change *socially* imposed identities and to have those changes *legally* and *institutionally* secured. I am indebted to Michael Kelly for a discussion of this point.

12

Foucault's Enlightenment: Critique, Revolution, and the Fashioning of the Self

James Schmidt and Thomas E. Wartenberg

Back to Kant?

In a well-known essay written shortly before his death, Michel Foucault reflected on Immanuel Kant's article "An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment?" and came to some surprising conclusions. The Kant we meet in Foucault's essay differs markedly from the thinker Foucault confronted two decades earlier in *The Order of Things*. There, Kant had the dubious honor of awakening philosophy from its "dogmatic slumber" only to lull it back into what Foucault dubbed "the anthropological sleep" — the belief that all of philosophy's questions could ultimately be reduced to the question "*Was ist der Mensch?*" Kant's legacy to the modern age was viewed as decidedly problematic: a philosophical anthropology caught in the bind of treating "man" as both an object of empirical inquiry and the transcendental ground of all knowledge.[1]

In "What Is Enlightenment?" Kant offers a rather different prospect: a recognition of "the contingency that has made us what we are" that offers us "the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do, or think."[2] If the Kant of *The Order of Things* marked the advent of an ultimately empty humanism, the Kant of "What Is Enlightenment?" was a good deal more interesting and provocative. The forefather of both Baudelaire and Nietzsche, he founded a tradition of inquiry that stretched from Hegel to Horkheimer and Habermas.[3] And as if this interpretation of Kant was not peculiar enough, Foucault capped it in a 1983 lecture on Kant's essay

with an uncharacteristically straightforward declaration of his own allegiances. We are told here that the "critical ontology of ourselves" inaugurated by Kant "has founded a form of reflection within which I have tried to work."[4] Foucault . . . a Kantian? And Kant . . . a Nietzschean? Who, one might reasonably ask, is kidding whom?

Foucault made his name by showing that every alleged victory of enlightenment marked the triumph of a new and insidious form of domination. Samuel Tuke and Scipion Pinel arrived in eighteenth-century prisons to separate criminals from the insane — and forced the insane "to enter a kind of endless trial for which the asylum furnished simultaneously police, magistrates, and torturers."[5] Freud shattered the silence surrounding sexuality — and inaugurated the "nearly infinite task of telling — telling oneself and an other, as often as possible" anything that might be linked in the remotest way to the body and its pleasures.[6] In *The Birth of the Clinic* the light that penetrates the dark interior of the body in search of life finds only death, just as in *Discipline and Punish* the prisoners who have been freed from the darkness of the dungeon are captured all the more securely in the light that floods through the Panopticon.[7] How could a thinker who had spent his life showing how the light of reason forges subtle but powerful bonds choose — at the very end — to cast his lot with the tradition he had mercilessly criticized? Was this one last quick change of masks by a master of the ironic gesture? Or had he come at last to question the coherence of his earlier work? He had spoken with contempt of "the 'blackmail' of the Enlightenment" — the "simplistic and authoritarian alternative" that "either you accept the Enlightenment and remain within the tradition of its rationalism . . . or else you criticize the Enlightenment and then try to escape from its principles of rationality."[8] But even as he was mocking the blackmailer, was his check already in the mail?

In a short eulogy published immediately after Foucault's death, Jürgen Habermas puzzled over Foucault's curious declaration of loyalties and asked,

> How does such a singularly affirmative understanding of modern philosophizing, always directed to our own actuality and imprinted in the here-and-now, fit with Foucault's unyielding criticism of modernity? How can Foucault's self-understanding as a thinker in the tradition of the Enlightenment

be compatible with his unmistakable criticism of this very form of knowledge of modernity?[9]

Habermas concluded that there was, in fact, no way to reconcile the position announced in "What Is Enlightenment?" with Foucault's earlier work. At the close of his eulogy he suggested that the tension between the two positions testified to a contradiction within Foucault's own thought, a contradiction which Foucault came to recognize only at the end of his life.

He contrasts his critique of power with the "analysis of truth" in such a fashion that the former becomes deprived of the normative yardsticks that it would have to borrow from the latter. Perhaps the force of this contradiction caught up with Foucault in this last of his texts, drawing him again into the circle of the philosophical discourse of modernity which he thought he could explode.[10]

Habermas's suggestion that Foucault's project was dogged by fundamental contradictions — an argument Habermas elaborated as length in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*[11] — has been seconded by a number of other critics.[12] Even Richard Bernstein's attempt at a "more sympathetic reading of what Foucault is doing" concludes with a by now familiar set of criticisms: "Foucault's own inciting rhetoric of disruption forces us to raise questions, and at the same time, appears to deny us any means for effectively dealing with these questions."[13] Thomas McCarthy's account of the ways in which Foucault and Habermas carry out their critiques of "impure reason" could well serve as a closing summary for the prosecution's case: while there is an "undeniable power" in Foucault's "historical-critical studies themselves," neither Foucault's "social ontology of power" nor his later concern with processes of "self-fashioning" offer "an adequate framework for critical social inquiry."[14]

There appears to be an emerging consensus that Foucault's invocation of Kant represents an attempt to parry the thrusts of critics which ultimately only succeeds in calling into question the integrity and coherence of his own earlier work.[15] But we need to be careful how we understand that invocation, for most of this discussion rests on a rather hasty interpretation of Foucault's debts to Kant. Hence our task in this essay will be to set aside the argument between Foucault and Habermas and look more carefully at Foucault's reflec-

tions on Kant's answer to the question "What is Enlightenment?" Our hope is that by examining the way in which he approached Kant's essay we can come to a clearer sense of what in fact Foucault might have been doing when he cast his lot with the tradition he saw stemming from Kant's response.

We can begin by abandoning the conventional assumption that Foucault's interest in Kant's essay was confined to the last year of his life. He had, in fact, been engaged with the essay off and on for at least a decade, returning to the essay on at least three occasions, each time finding slightly different nuances and drawing slightly different implications.[16] The best known of these discussions stems from a lecture delivered several times in the Untied States and eventually published in 1984 by Paul Rabinow in his *Foucault Reader*. It links Kant's question about enlightenment to Baudelaire's account of the experience of modernity. The curious juxtaposition of Kant and Baudelaire is used to define a notion of philosophical interrogation "that simultaneously problematizes man's relation to the present, man's historical being, and the constitution of the self as an autonomous subject."[17] It is but a short step from here to Foucault's own understanding of the concerns of ethics — those "technologies of the self" that stand at the center of the second and third volumes of *The History of Sexuality*.

Foucault, however, devoted lectures to Kant's essay on at least two other occasions. In January of 1983, he opened his course at the Collège de France with a lecture on the essay; it was this lecture, published shortly before Foucault's death in *Magazine littéraire,* to which Habermas responded in his eulogy.[18] While the opening discussion of Kant resembles the version printed in the *Foucault Reader,* it rather quickly takes a different turn. Foucault is concerned here not with Baudelaire and the problem of modernity but rather with Kant's writings on the philosophy of history, and his interest is in exploring how the question "What is Enlightenment?" is linked to the question "What is Revolution?" Finally, to confound matters further, an even earlier discussion of Kant's essay has recently come to light: a 1978 lecture before the Société française de Philosophie.[19] In the course of a discussion of the genealogy of the notion of "critique," Foucault turned to Kant's essay "What Is Enlightenment?" and, invoking his work on the notion of "governmentality," defined

Enlightenment in terms of a resistance to specific forms of "governmentalization."

Kant's essay, then, had a peculiar hold on Foucault. He revisited the question "What is Enlightenment?" at least three times and each time explored a different aspect of the question.[20] His invocation of Kant should neither be written off as simply an ironic gesture nor turned into a deathbed concession of defeat. It is instead a remarkably productive interrogation of a thinker who never ceased to inspire and provoke Foucault. And as such, it deserves to be scrutinized more carefully than has typically been the case.

Enlightenment, Critique, and Governmentality

In May 1978 Foucault delivered a lecture before the Société française de Philosophie on the topic "What Is Critique?" Nine years earlier, amid the controversy over the declaration of the "end of man" in *The Order of Things* and with Foucault's loyalty to "structuralism" presupposed by both critics and defenders, he had appeared before the same group to pose the question "What is an Author?"[21] He returned in 1978, in the wake of the flurry of interviews and lectures on the nature of power and on the role of the intellectual which followed the publication of *Discipline and Punish* (1975) and the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* (1976), to examine the emergence in the West of "a relationship to that which exists, to that which one knows, to that which one does, a relationship to society, to culture" that he termed "the critical attitude."[22]

Foucault's genealogy of the "critical attitude" is intimately intertwined with the development of a system of power he called "governmentality." In lectures delivered in 1978 and 1979 — and presumably intended to execute the project sketched at the conclusion of the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* — Foucault explored the development of an ensemble of techniques and strategies that sought to govern individuals "in a continuous and permanent way."[23] As Foucault saw it, "governmentality" arose from the combination of two different conceptions of political reason: the Christian model of "pastoral rule" with its concern for constant, individualized care of the members of a "flock," and the classical model of the *polis* as a union of individuals who are free to determine their own lives. "Our soci-

eties proved to be really demonic," he concluded, "since they happened to combine these two games — the city-citizen game and the shepherd-flock game — in what we call the modern states."[24] The concern with the governance of individuals entrusts the political order with that power to survey, mold, and discipline individuals which had previous been the prerogative of religions authorities. With this notion of "governmentality" Foucault sought to elaborate the prehistory of that "disciplinary power" whose triumph he had documented in *Discipline and Punish*.[25] But our concern is not with exploring the modifications with Foucault's account of the rise of the doctrine of "reason of the state" and the "theory of the police" introduced into his attempt to trace the genealogy of what he characterized as the "disciplinary society." Instead we must see how the question of enlightenment fits into this complex.

In his discussions of the nature of power, Foucault continually stressed that it is not to be viewed as something one person or group possesses or something to which others must submit. Instead,

> power must be analyzed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localized here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation.[26]

Power thus cannot be understood simply as a "no": it is also — as Foucault never tired of stressing — "productive." It does not simply interdict, it can also induce individuals to speak. It does not always take the form of repression. It can also manifest itself as an incitement to act.[27] By virtue of its ubiquity, power is something that is never per se resisted. Rather, resistance itself takes place only under the aegis of power: "power relationships open up a space in the middle of which the struggles develop."[28] Every particular deployment of power implies certain possibilities of struggle and resistance — a resistance that never takes the form of a total rejection of "power," but which rather will be manifested as struggles aimed at the particular and distinctive configurations of power.

An account of the emergence of "governmentality" will thus necessarily involve the writing of a history of the emergence of the distinctive forms of resistance which this new form of power makes possible. The lecture "Qu'est-ce que la critique" offered a sketch of such a history. Foucault argued that the question "how to govern?" dominates political discourse in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Resistance to this form of power does not crystallize into the counter-question "how not to be governed?" It instead arises as a host of more specific questions: "how not to be governed like that, by that, in the name of principles such as that, in view of such objectives and by the means of such procedures."[29] It is this attempt to question the particular forms in which the "art of governance" is exercised that announces the advent of the notion of critique — which Foucault defines as "the art of not being governed in such a manner."[30]

Foucault sees this resistance exercised in three broad domains.[31] The spiritual authority of the church, which had claimed the responsibility of governing souls in light of its understanding of the scriptures, meets with increasingly searching questions about the proper limits of ecclesiastical authority, the authenticity of particular portions of the scriptures, and finally the more sweeping question of the veracity of the scriptures themselves. In the civil sphere, the authority of those who purport to govern others meets with resistance in the form of an examination of the rights and limits of sovereignty, an examination that culminates in a reconsideration of the problem of natural law. And, more generally, any claim to speak with authority meets with resistance in the form of a discussion of the nature of certainty.

> The Bible, right, science; scripture, nature, the relationship to the self; the Magisterium, the law, the authority of dogmatism. One sees how the play of governmentalization and critique, the rapport of the one to the other, has given place to the phenomena which are, I believe, cardinal in the history of western culture. . . . But one especially sees that the focus of critique is essentially the bundle of relations which tie the one to the other, or the one to two others, power, the truth, and the subject.[32]

While governmentalization subjects individuals to mechanisms of power that lay claim to truth, critique "is the movement by which the subject gives itself the right to interrogate the truth regarding its

effects as power and interrogate power regarding its discourse of truth."[33] Critique is thus "the art of voluntary inservitude," a "thoughtful indocility," which aims at a "desubjectification" within the "politics of truth."[34]

Having completed this account of the origins of the idea of critique, Foucault suggests that the understanding of critique he has elaborated finds a particularly succinct expression in Kant's definition of enlightenment. Four aspects of Kant's definition strike Foucault as relevant for his own discussion of the intertwining of critique and governmentality. First, Kant defines enlightenment by contrasting it to a state of minority that is maintained authoritatively. Second, this state of minority is defined in terms of an incapacity of humanity to use its understanding without the direction by another. Third, Kant sees a correlation between an excess of authority on the one side and a lack of courage on the other. And finally, the domains Kant invokes as the arenas where the contest between minority and enlightenment are fought out are precisely those that Foucault noted in his discussion of the relationship of critique and governmentalization: religion, law, conscience.[35]

In Kant's essay Foucault found an account of enlightenment which never lost sight of the interplay between critique and power. With the imperative *"Sapere Aude!"* — the famous motto that stands at the start of Kant's essay — Kant defined enlightenment as the courage to use one's own reason. In the almost equally well-known phrase he attributed to Frederick the Great, he stated that only a truly enlightened ruler could say to his subjects "argue as much as you like, about whatever you like, only obey." Foucault would seem to be suggesting that we need both imperatives if we are to understand the nature of critique. Kant's "courage to know" is ultimately the courage to recognize the limits of our consciousness. And the intertwining of argument and obedience articulated in the quote from Frederick testifies to Kant's attempt to establish the critical enterprise of "desubjectification" within the "play of power and truth." Far from rejecting obedience to sovereignty, it was Kant's unique achievement to have grounded obedience on the concept of autonomy. Critique is a play of power and truth that gives the subject the power to govern itself, a power that is not necessarily opposed to obedience to sovereigns.[36]

Foucault's interest in Kant's essay is not limited to an examination of the context in which Kant articulated his definition of enlightenment. Equally important for Foucault are the problems Kant's discussion passes on to the nineteenth century, and the fate of these questions in our own time. The history of the nineteenth century, he suggests, can be understood as the continuation of that critical enterprise which Kant had situated in relationship to enlightenment, but with critique now directed at enlightenment itself. There is a *"décalage"* between enlightenment and critique that opens the possibility of critique turning back upon itself and reexamining its relationship with enlightenment.[37] For the nineteenth century, Foucault argues, this reopening of the question of enlightenment must address three "fundamental facts": (1) the development of positivist science, whose confidence rests on the careful application of critique to each of its results, (2) the development of an account of the state, which sees it either as the fundamental reason of history (Foucault is probably thinking of Clausewitz and Hegel in this context) or as an instrument for the rationalization of economy and society (the dream of Saint-Simon and of socialism), and (3) the binding together of positivist science and the development of the state into "a science of the state."[38]

In the face of these new "facts," the question "What is Enlightenment?" must wrestle with the problem of whether the excesses of political power — that is, of "governmentalization" — can any longer become the objects of criticism, since it would now seem that reason itself has been intimately implicated in and responsible for the very "excesses" that it presumes to criticize.[39] Foucault sees efforts to address this problem as having had rather different histories in Germany and in France.[40] In Germany, Foucault sees a tradition stretching from "the Hegelian left to the Frankfurt school" which pursues the question "What is Enlightenment?" in the form of a critique of positivism, objectivism, rationalization, and technification that focuses on the relationship between these naive forms of science and the forms of domination prevalent in modern society. In France, in contrast, Foucault sees the eighteenth century *philosophes* as enjoying a limited privilege as political philosophers, but dismissed as a rather minor episode in the history of philosophy. For this reason, he argues, the Enlightenment was never seen as having the same

significance as it did in Germany.[41] When the question "What is Enlightenment?" came to be taken up in France, it was in the guise of reflections on the history and philosophy of science, most notably in the work of J. Cavaillés, Gaston Bachelard, and Georges Canguilhem. Here the question of enlightenment is posed as a "problem of the constitution of meaning" — the problem of why one particular form of rationality emerges rather than another. In this, Foucault sees the *"réciproque et l'inverse"* of the true problem of enlightenment: "How is it that rationalization is conducive to a desire for power?"[42]

It is not difficult to see how Foucault understood his own development in light of this division. Working within the history of science, he found himself posing the sorts of questions that had already been taken up by the Frankfurt school. "If I had known the Frankfurt school at the right time," he confessed in a 1983 interview with Gérard Raulet, "I would have been spared a lot of work. Some nonsense, I wouldn't have expressed and taken many detours as I sought not to let myself be led astray when the Frankfurt school had already opened the ways."[43] By the time of his 1978 lecture "What Is Critique?" he had come to recognize that the inquiries in which he had been engaged converged with the work of the Frankfurt school and could thus be seen as continuing that interrogation of the question "What is Enlightenment?" which Kant had commenced.

The ultimate implications of Kant's question, Foucault concluded, must be drawn out in "practical historico-philosophical" investigations which examine the "relations between the structures of rationality that articulate true discourses and the mechanisms of subjectification which are bound to them."[44] The question "What is Enlightenment?" forces us to ask "what is it that I am, the me which belongs to this humanity, perhaps to this fragment [*frange:* literally "fringe"], to this moment, to this instant of humanity which is subjected to the power of truth in general and of truths in particular."[45] The goal of the "practical historico-philosophical" inquiries which Foucault sees as responding to these questions will be to "desubjectivize philosophical questions by recourse to historical content, to free the historical contents by an interrogation of the effects of the power of this truth."[46] These inquiries will concern themselves with that epoch that constitutes the "moment of the formation of modern humanity," with "*Aufklärung* in the broad sense of the term, of that

period without fixed dates to which Kant, Weber, and others, make reference, of those multiple entries by which it may be defined, such as the formation of capitalism, the constitution of the bourgeois world, the establishment of the state system, the foundation of modern science with its correlative techniques." To pose the question "What is 'What is Enlightenment?' " is thus to "encounter the historical schematic of our modernity."[47]

In this lecture from 1978 we find the basic kernel from which the seemingly disparate concerns of the two 1983 discussions of Kant's essay arose. At its origin, Kant's question "What is Enlightenment?" is bound up with the critique of political institutions, with that "art of voluntary inservitude" that calls the mechanisms of governmentalization into question. It is but a short step from defining the question in this way to looking at how Kant himself examined political institutions and, more specifically, the French Revolution. But the question "What is Enlightenment?" is also, as Foucault has argued, the question "what am I," a question of what forces have shaped and defined humanity. From here it is but a short step to the concern with self-fashioning that occupies Foucault in his discussion of Baudelaire. Foucault's examination of the question "What is critique?" thus announces the themes which would concern Foucault when he took up Kant's essay again at the end of his life.

Enlightenment, History, Revolution

In the opening lecture of a 1983 course at the Collège de France on "The Government of Self and of Others" Foucault returned to Kant's 1784 essay. The text that appeared in *Magazine littéraire* — a partial transcription of a longer lecture — differs markedly from the 1978 discussion. First of all, the question "What is Enlightenment?" now occupies the center of Foucault's reflections. Enlightenment is no longer approached through an analysis of critique.[48] Foucault's concern with the origins of Kant's essay reaches back no further than the immediate circumstances of Kant's composition of the text: a question posed in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* and answered by both Moses Mendelssohn and Kant.[49] Kant's essay appears here as a novel and unique work, a work which "seems to . . . introduce a new type of question into the field of philosophical reflection," namely an

interrogation of the present which is without precedent in the history of philosophy.[50] Jettisoning discussion of the relationship of enlightenment and critique is tied to a second, and more fundamental, change in Foucault's approach to the question of enlightenment. The notion of "governmentality" — and the interest in the growth and spread of techniques of governmentalization — which had loomed so large in the 1978 discussion has now been supplanted in the course which the lecture introduces by a focus on ancient practices of the "governance of the self." Enlightenment is no longer presented as a response to the process of governmentalization; it is instead linked in Foucault's mind with a concern with the governance of one's own self that he would ultimately trace back to Greco-Roman antiquity.

Despite these changes, one line of continuity with the earlier discussion remains: the linkage between enlightenment and modernity. In Kant's essay, Foucault argues, "one sees philosophy . . . problematizing its own discursive present-ness: a present-ness that it interrogates as an event, an event whose meaning, value, and philosophical singularity it is required to state, and in which it is to elicit at once its own raison d'être and the foundation of what it has to say."[51] Foucault places considerable emphasis on the fact that "it was the *Aufklärung* itself which first named itself the *Aufklärung*." In this sovereign act of naming itself, "a cultural process of indubitably a very singular character . . . came to self awareness." The Enlightenment, he argues, is "the first epoch which names its own self." Rather than simply defining itself against other epochs as "a period of decadence or prosperity, splendor or misery," it instead marks itself off as a period with its own special mission.[52]

The connection between enlightenment and modernity, which Foucault examined in the 1978 essay only after a discussion of the prehistory of enlightenment as the critique of governmentalization, now serves as his point of departure. Foucault suggested that it would be possible to begin with Kant's questioning of the nature of the present and "to follow the trajectory of this modality of philosophy down through the nineteenth century to the present day." Indeed, the discussion of the parallels between Kant and Baudelaire in the essay in the *Foucault Reader* takes precisely this tack. But the remainder of the 1983 lecture proceeds in a different direction, examining

Kant's 1798 discussion of the French Revolution in *The Contest of the Faculties.* The discussion of "modernity" thus leads not to an examination of "self-fashioning" but instead to the problem of revolution.

The Contest of the Faculties is usually read in the light of either Kant's discussions of the teleology of history or his critique of the "right to revolution."[53] Foucault, however, suggests that Kant's concern in the 1798 essay can best be understood as paralleling that of the essay on enlightenment. Both are concerned not so much with problems in the philosophy of history as with "the question of the present, of the contemporary moment."[54] Foucault is, indeed, alert to a distinctive feature of Kant's essay: the questions that Kant is interested in answering in his discussion of the French Revolution are not always the questions readers typically assume he should be answering. His analysis of the revolution is undertaken as part of an attempt to answer the question "Is the human race continually improving?"[55] Kant argued that an answer rested on the discovery of a "sign" within history that was simultaneously "rememorative" (documenting that the alleged cause of progress has always been active in human history), "demonstrative" (demonstrating that it is presently active in history), and "prognosticative" (foretelling the continued efficacy of the cause).[56] Kant found this sign not in "any of those momentous deeds or misdeeds of men which make small in their eyes what was formerly great or make great what was formerly small" but rather in "the attitude of the onlookers as it reveals itself in public while the drama of great political change is taking place." In the "universal yet disinterested sympathy" that the public displays toward one set of protagonists Kant finds evidence that, because of the universality of this sympathy, "mankind as a whole shares a certain character in common" and that mankind, by virtue of its disinterestedness, "has a moral character, or at least the makings of one." In short, it is not in the success or failure of the French Revolution itself, but rather in the "sympathy which borders almost on enthusiasm" with which the revolution was greeted by onlookers that Kant finds evidence of "a moral disposition within the human race."[57]

Foucault is concerned to distinguish Kant's agenda in *The Contest of the Faculties* from attempts to evaluate "what part of the Revolution should be preserved." The task of philosophy is not to legitimate the right to revolution, but instead "to know what is to be done with that

will to revolution, that 'enthusiasm' for the Revolution, which is quite different from the revolutionary enterprise itself."[58] It is here that the parallel to the essay on enlightenment can be drawn, for there too Kant was, in Foucault's reading, attempting to understand what enlightenment is, rather than trying to provide justifications for the effort to become enlightened. Kant eschews the language of rights and legitimacy and instead attempts to interpret the significance of a contemporary event: the enthusiasm with which the French Revolution was greeted.

Foucault's linking of Kant's reflections on enlightenment with Kant's discussion of revolution is not, however, simply a matter of tracing the implications of Kant's moral and political thought in the 1780s. Foucault had already wrestled with the issue of onlookers' reactions to revolutions in his discussion of the most dramatic upheaval of his own time: the Iranian Revolution. To be sure, here it was not a question of onlookers' general enthusiasm. In a 1979 interview he asked "what is it about what has happened in Iran that a whole lot of people, on the left and on the right, find somewhat irritating?"[59] Indeed, the "epidermic reaction" Foucault noted among observers of the revolution "was not one of immediate sympathy."[60] Foucault attributed this uneasiness to the peculiarity of the Iranian Revolution itself: "We recognize a revolution when we can observe two dynamics: one is that of the contradictions in that society, that of the class struggle or of social confrontations. Then there is a political dynamics, that is to say the presence of a vanguard, class, party, of political ideology."[61] The difficulty the Iranian revolution presents is that neither of these dynamics is visible because religion effaces all differences and presents the spectacle of an entire population rising against a single ruler.

In his discussion of the Iranian Revolution, Foucault invokes François Furet's distinction between the "totality of the processes of economic and social and economic transformations" — which typically are in motion long before the revolutionary upsurge and will continue long after the revolution is over — and "the specificity of the Revolutionary event." As Foucault understands it, Furet sees the latter as "the specificity of what people experienced deep inside," as "what they experienced in that sort of theater that they put together from day to day and that constituted the Revolution."[62] Foucault

implies that while much of the ambivalence with which the Iranian revolution was greeted on the political left had to do with the sense that religion was playing the role of an ideology which masks social contradictions, it might be better understood as "the vocabulary, the ceremonial, the timeless drama into which one could fit the historical drama of a people that pitted its very existence against that of its sovereign."[63] Religion, in short, should not be seen as simply the "opium of the people"; it can also play the role of "the spirit of a world without spirit."[64]

Foucault does not deny that the Iranian Revolution exhibited profoundly disturbing aspects. In the Iranian Revolution "the most important realities mingled with the most atrocious"; "the formidable hope to make Islam once again a great, living civilization" collided with "virulent xenophobia"; "world stakes mingled with regional rivalries. And then there was the problem of imperialism and that of the subjugation of women."[65] But, like Kant, Foucault is concerned not so much with making critical judgments about the revolution itself as with understanding the significance of this event for the present.

"Is there or is there not a reason to revolt?" Foucault asked in a 1979 essay on the Iranian Revolution.[66] He swiftly sidestepped the question: "Let's leave the question open. There are revolts and that is a fact." The importance of Iran for Foucault lies not in what the revolution may or may not achieve but rather in the simple fact that it took place.

> Among the things that characterize this revolution is the fact that it has brought out — and few peoples in history have had this — an absolutely collective will. The collective will is a political myth with which jurists and philosophers try to analyze or to justify institutions, etc. It's a theoretical tool: nobody has ever seen the "collective will" and, personally, I thought it was like God, like the soul, something one would never encounter. . . . [W]e met in Theran and throughout Iran, the collective will of a people. Well, you have to salute it, it doesn't happen every day.[67]

Kant found, in the enthusiasm for the French Revolution, a sign of the interest of mankind in establishing free, republican constitutions. Examining the not-so-enthusiastic response which greeted the Iranian Revolution, Foucault found evidence of the ability of a vertiginous freedom to break with history and to refashion self and society

in a new form. The revolutionary is "outside of history," in a life-and-death struggle to give new form to life. In a such a context it is easy to understand why revolutions find their "expression and their mode of performance in religious themes."[68] What fascinates Foucault about Iran is the way in which religion provided the revolutionaries with "the promise and guarantee of finding something that would radically change their subjectivity."[69]

"It is through revolt," he wrote in what could well be read as his most explicit political confession, "that subjectivity (not that of great men but that of whomever) introduces itself into history and gives it a breath of life":

> A delinquent puts his life into the balance against these absurd punishments; a madman can no longer accept confinement and the forfeiture of his rights; a people refuses the regime that oppresses it. This does not make the rebel in the first case innocent, nor does it cure in the second, and it does not assure the third rebel of the promised tomorrow. One does not have to be in solidarity with them. One does not have to maintain that these confused voices sound better than the others and express the ultimate truth. For there to be a sense in listening to them and in searching for what they want to say, it is sufficient that they exist and that they have against them so much which is set up to silence them.[70]

The "strategist," Foucault argues, will attempt to assess the significance of singular events in the broader framework of history. But Foucault embraces what he terms an "anti-strategic" ethics that compels him "to be respectful when something singular arises, to be intransigent when power offends against the universal[,] . . . to watch out for something, a little beneath history, that breaks with it, that agitates it; it is necessary to look, a little behind politics, for that which ought to limit it, unconditionally."[71] What "ought" to limit politics, Foucault seems to imply here, is the freedom of individuals to make themselves into "something quite different."[72]

Foucault's concern with revolution, then, is not simply a historical one. For Foucault, Kant's two questions — "What is Enlightenment?" and "What is the Revolution?" — "continue to haunt" modern philosophy.[73] The *Aufklärung*, he argues, "represents something more for us than a mere episode in the history of ideas." It is instead "a philosophical question, inscribed in our thought since the Eighteenth century."[74] Just as Foucault saw Kant as less interested in de-

ciding for or against the French Revolution than in understanding the significance of the event for the present, so too Foucault was not interested in efforts "to preserve alive and intact the heritage of *Aufklärung*." Indeed, Foucault dismisses "piety" of this sort — and it is difficult to believe that he is not casting a glance at Habermas here — as "the most touching of treasons."[75] "It is not the legacy of *Aufklärung* which is our business to conserve, but rather the very question of this event and its meaning, the question of the historicity of thought of the universal, which ought to [be] kept present and retained in mind as that which has to be thought."[76]

At the close of the 1984 lecture, Foucault argued that there were "two great critical traditions" stemming from Kant. The first, which he characterizes in terms of an "analytic of truth," concerns itself with defining "the conditions under which a true knowledge is possible."[77] The second tradition, characterized as "an ontology of the present, an ontology of ourselves" addresses the questions "What is our present? What is the contemporary field of possible experience?" For this "ontology of ourselves," what is significant about enlightenment and revolution is not a matter of what can be found in them which can withstand the trial of the analytic of truth. It is instead a question of what still resonates in us in these events: the possibility of being other than we are, of thinking other than we do. It was this dimension of the question "What is Enlightenment?" that he would move to the center of attention in what proved to be his final discussion of the question.

Enlightenment, Modernity, Self-Fashioning

Having looked at Foucault's two previous treatments of Kant's essay on the Enlightenment, we are now ready to return to his final, and perhaps most familiar, discussion. But even familiarity with the essay cannot diminish the peculiarity of its approach to the question of enlightenment. Indeed, at first glance, the essay appears to be a curious pastiche of arguments, almost willfully thrown together. It opens with a brief discussion of Kant's essay, noting once again the novelty of its focus on the present, examining the way in which Kant defines enlightenment as an "exit" from a state of "immaturity," and discussing Kant's distinction between the public and private uses of

reason. But before he has even begun to touch on the difficulties of Kant's definition, the essay takes a strange turn. The by now familiar suggestion that the novelty of Kant's essay lies in its "reflection on 'today' as difference in history" allows Foucault to see a possible "point of departure" for his own reflections: "the outline of what one might call the attitude of modernity."[78]

According to Foucault, Kant's essay provides the impetus for a way of looking at "modernity" that breaks with the habit of speaking of modernity as "an epoch . . . situated on a calendar, . . . preceded by a more or less naive premodernity, and followed by an enigmatic and troubling 'postmodernity.' "[79] It is not too difficult to guess who it is that Foucault has in mind here. In September 1980, Jürgen Habermas received the Theodor Adorno Prize from the city of Frankfurt and delivered a lecture on "Modernity versus Postmodernity" which argued that much of what was currently being offered as "postmodernity" was in fact a thinly disguised "antimodernity." As an illustration he pointed to those "young conservatives" who, "on the basis of modernistic attitudes . . . justify an irreconcilable anti-modernism."[80] The term "young conservative" was an allusion, as Nancy Fraser has noted, to the "conservative revolutionaries" of the Weimar Republic, "a group of radical, anti-modernist intellectuals whose numbers included Martin Heidegger, Ernst Jünger, Carl Schmitt, and Hans Freyer."[81] Habermas saw this group as seeking to oppose instrumental reason with "a principle only accessible through evocation, be it the will to power or sovereignty, Being of the dionysiac force of the poetical." And he had a more current roster of recruits for the party: "In France this line leads from Bataille via Foucault to Derrida."[82]

Arguing against this line of reasoning, Foucault maintains that modernity does not represent an epoch toward which one must take a positive or negative stance. Modernity can better be seen "as an attitude than as a period of history" — it is "a mode of relating to contemporary reality; a voluntary choice made by certain people; in the end, a way of thinking and feeling." By "attitude," he explains, he means a way of "acting and behaving that at one and the same time marks a relation of belonging and presents itself as a task." And, alluding to his work on Greek sexuality, he suggests that what he terms an "attitude" is "a bit, no doubt, like what the Greeks called an *ethos*."[83] Thus, while Foucault's earliest discussion of the question

"What is Enlightenment?" had sought to situate enlightenment within the specific context of the process of governmentalization, here the historical, political, and social dimensions of enlightenment are cast aside in favor of an interest in the significance of enlightenment for the individual subject. "Enlightenment must be considered," he stresses, "both as a process in which men participate collectively and as an act of courage to be accomplished personally."[84] In addition to whatever significance the Enlightenment may have in the context of political and social struggles, it also must be understood as an action of individuals that is fraught with moral significance.

It is in the context of this moralizing and individualizing of enlightenment that the unlikely pairing of Immanuel Kant and Charles Baudelaire must be understood. In his essay "The Painter of Modern Life" Baudelaire defined modernity as "the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable."[85] Noting that it was easier for painters "to decide outright that everything about the garb of an age is absolutely ugly" than to carry out the labor of searching in modern life for "the mysterious element of beauty that it may contain," Baudelaire insisted that the "transitory, fugitive element" must "on no account be despised or dispensed with."[86] It is the unique achievement of Constantin Guys — whose work Baudelaire's essay examines — to have sought to "extract from fashion whatever element it may contain of poetry within history, to distil the eternal from the transitory."[87]

Foucault found in Baudelaire's discussion of Guys an attitude toward the present that sought neither to "treat the passing moment as sacred in order to try to maintain or perpetuate it" nor to despise it and dismiss it. Instead we find "a difficult interplay between the truth of what is real and the exercise of freedom." "Baudelairean modernity," Foucault concludes, "is an exercise in which extreme attention to what is real is confronted with the practice of a liberty that simultaneously respects this reality and violates it."[88] Baudelaire's attitude toward the present is elaborated by Foucault in terms of a "relationship that has to be established with oneself." "To be modern is not to accept oneself as one is in the flux of passing moments; it is to take oneself as object of a complex and difficult elaboration: what Baudelaire, in the vocabulary of his day, calls *dandysme*."[89]

Baudelaire explored the phenomenon of dandyism in a group of "moral reflections and considerations" provoked by Guys's drawings.[90] An institution "beyond the laws," dandyism nevertheless possesses "rigorous laws which all of its subjects must strictly obey." Dandyism is "first and foremost the burning need to create for oneself a personal originality, bounded only by the limits of the proprieties. It is a kind of cult of the self which can nevertheless survive the pursuit of happiness to be found in someone else . . .; which can even survive all that goes by in the name of illusions." Baudelaire is willing to describe it as "a kind of religion" — indeed, it is bound by a system of rules as despotic as those of the strictest of monastic orders — and he sees it as a phenomenon that appears "in all periods of transition, when democracy is not yet all-powerful, and aristocracy is only just beginning to totter and fall."[91] The attitude of modernity thus involves, in Foucault's words, an "indispensable asceticism." The dandy "makes of his body, his behavior, his feelings and passions, his very existence, a work of art." Modern man does not seek to "discover himself, his secrets and his hidden truth; he is the man who tries to invent himself."[92]

But what, if anything, does this have to do with Immanuel Kant, whose moral philosophy is hardly renowned for its sympathy toward the contingent, the fleeting, the ephemeral, or the idiosyncratic? Foucault is not concerned with the content of Kant's account of enlightenment and with its connection to his moral philosophy. His emphasis instead falls on what he takes to be Kant's achievement in addressing the question "What is Enlightenment?": just as Guys sought to discover the eternal in the "the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent," so Kant — as Foucault reads him — attempted to find a philosophical significance in the controversies of his age. This emphasis became more pronounced in Foucault's later encounters with Kant's essay. In the 1978 lecture "What Is Critique?" Foucault situated Kant's essay within the more general context of a critique of governmentality. By 1984, the essay had become something more important to Foucault than one response among many to the ubiquitous pressure of governmentalization. In "Kant on Enlightenment and Revolution," Foucault was concerned with the particular mode of attention to the present manifested by Kant in his attempt to give philosophic significance to the contemporary reaction to the French

Revolution. It is this mode of attention — now characterized as the attitude of modernity — that Foucault ultimately attributed to Kant's own attempt to answer the question "What is Enlightenment?" and it is this attitude which sustains the unlikely link between Kant and Baudelaire.

Kant's essay ultimately came to exemplify for Foucault a manner of doing philosophy which could well serve as a model for his own efforts.

> It is a reflection by Kant on the contemporary status of his own enterprise. No doubt it is not the first time that a philosopher has given his reasons for understanding his work at a particular moment. But it seems to me that it is the first time that a philosopher has connected in this way, closely and from the inside, the significance of his work with respect to knowledge, a reflection on history and a particular analysis of the specific moment at which he is writing and because of which he is writing.[93]

Insofar as Foucault's own efforts partake of this modernist ethos, this attempt to heroicize the present, he could characterize his own work as continuing the project which Kant had announced. His reading of Kant suggests a rather different motto for enlightened modernity than Kant's *Sapere Aude!* For Foucault it became a question of finding the courage to create oneself.

Conclusion

Ian Hacking once likened those who have demanded that Foucault provide grounds for his critique of modern society to the crowds who gathered around David Hume's house at the hour of his death "demanding to know when the atheist would recant." "I suspect it won't be long," Hacking concluded, "before the solemn clamour of the intellectuals about Foucault sounds as quaint as the baying of the Edinburgh mob."[94] Hume died without recanting. So did Foucault.

Foucault's "What Is Enlightenment?" should not be read as a deathbed conversion. His interest in Kant spanned his career and he had been concerned with Kant's essay on the question of enlightenment for at least the last decade of his life. Through it all, his stance toward the enlightenment remained a good deal more nuanced and complex than his critics wold lead us to believe. It was

never, for him, a question of deciding "for" or "against" the enlightenment — as if we could someone manage to disavow an event which has, in fundamental ways, defined how we think about ourselves. What was ultimately at stake was the question "How can the growth of capabilities be disconnected from the intensification of power relations?"[95] The task, as he saw it, was to understand the character and the significance of that complex interplay between "power and capabilities" which, following Nietzsche, he discerned at the very heart of the question of enlightenment.

In his earliest discussion of Kant's essay, the enlightenment is situated in a particular historical context and assigned a specific task. It arises in the shadow of the absolutist state as a response to the process of "governmentalization" — the attempt to govern is countered by the art of learning how not to be governed. In his last discussions of Kant's essay the question of the historical context of the idea of enlightenment has been dropped. Enlightenment, freed from the struggle with governmentality, now becomes a project which subjects execute upon themselves: that "patient labor of giving form to our impatience for liberty."[96] To be sure, something has changed between these two formulations — and it is important not to misunderstand what it is.

Foucault did not, as Thomas McCarthy argues, replace an interpretation of power in which "everything was a function of context, of impersonal forces and fields, from which there was no escape" with an interpretation in which individuals are free to make of themselves whatever they will, "with scant regard for social, political, and economic context."[97] Foucault had always stressed that power must be seen as productive rather than simply as repressive, and always emphasized that every attempt to exercise power always carried within it certain specific possibilities of resistance. Although a casual reading of his earlier works may suggest a parallel to that "society without alternatives" which fueled the nightmares of an earlier generation of critical theorists, Foucault was too much a Nietzschean to ignore how much more complex and interesting mankind has become thanks to the efforts of the ascetic priests. The networks of power mapped out in *Madness and Civilization, The Birth of the Clinic,* and *The Order of Things* are not seamless. The places from which

resistance might be mounted are marked by names like de Sade, Nerval, Artaud, Nietzsche, and Hölderlin.[98]

The essays on Kant make more explicit the cryptic suggestions of his earlier works. The "intensification of power relations" which Foucault traced in his studies of the "disciplinary society" has another aspect: the "growth of capabilities." Power always appears in two guises: it dominates, but it also enables.[99] His earlier works had primarily been devoted to documenting the "intensification" of power. Their concern was to show how "normalizing" practices which sought to form and shape subjects had come to replace earlier, juridically influenced notions of sovereignty. Focusing on the role of the human sciences in the emergence of this new regime of power, Foucault took only passing notice of the new capacities for expression and self-formation that arose alongside this new regime. With the second and third volumes of *The History of Sexuality* his emphasis shifted. Pride of place now went to an account of the development of capabilities for self-fashioning. But it is essential to remember that this growth of capabilities takes place within history. It has a context: the continuing intensification of power relations. To stress only one side of the interplay of power and capabilities, as Foucault sometimes did, is to betray his own most important insight. To assume that Foucault abandoned a conception of power as domination for a conception of power as unfettered self-fashioning is to misunderstand the relationship between power and capabilities that lay at the heart of Foucault's project.

Foucault was not, however, only a Nietzschean. He was also, as Hacking has reminded us, "a remarkably able Kantian."[100] If some critics have overlooked the ambivalence of his Nietzsche-inspired notion of power, others have perhaps not given enough attention to the possibility that at least some of Foucault's alleged shortcomings have a recognizably Kantian cast. Richard Bernstein, for example, concludes that whatever might be said in defense of Foucault, a problem nevertheless remains:

> He is constantly tempting us with his references to new possibilities of thinking and acting, of giving new impetus to the undefined work of freedom, of the need to grasp the points where change is possible and desirable, and of determining the precise form this change should take. But the problem is that these references to new possibilities and changes that are desirable are

in danger of becoming empty and vacuous unless we have some sense of which possibilities and changes are *desirable* — and why.[101]

Christian Garve noted similar problems in his 1792 critique of Kant's moral law. "A law presupposes motives," Garve argued, "but motives presuppose that a difference has already been recognized between a worse state and a better one."[102] For Garve, the concept of "happiness" provided the criterion by which various states might be ordered. Kant's establishing of "worthiness to be happy" over the pursuit of happiness struck him as eliminating any possible incentive for moral action.

Kant's answer, of course, is that morality is concerned neither with how to attain happiness nor with why we happen to desire one thing rather than another. The concept of happiness is too indeterminate to serve as a foundation for morality and the choice of the subsidiary ends which combine together to form the notion of happiness will always be arbitrary: "To *give preference* to one state rather than another as a determinant of will is merely an act of freedom (*res merae facultais*, as the lawyers say) which takes no account of whether the particular determinant is good or evil in itself."[103] Kant has nothing to tell us about how the maxims by which we direct our action arise. As Ian Hacking has stressed, Kant — no less than Foucault — based his ethics on a freedom which must remain "necessarily outside the province of human knowledge": "There is nothing to be said about freedom, except that within its space we construct our ethics and our lives. Those who criticize Foucault for not giving us a place to stand might start their critique with Kant."[104] Kant's ethics tells us nothing about which ends are more desirable than others. That we happen to desire certain things rather than other things, that we formulate maxims which direct our actions toward certain goals rather than others, all of this is presupposed by Kant's ethics. But none of it is, properly speaking, the content of Kant's ethics. Kant's concern is rather with the question of how we can construct a standard against which we can test those maxims of action which flow from our unexplainable but undeniable freedom.

What separates Kant from Foucault is the question of what sort of agreements are possible between free subjects who are capable of reasoning together. The categorical imperative, as Onora O'Neill has

stressed, "is the supreme principle of reasoning not because it is an algorithm either for thought or for action, but because it is an indispensable strategy for disciplining thinking or action in ways that are not contingent on specific and variable circumstances."[105] In Kant, the "maxim of unprejudiced thinking" ("think for yourself") is joined to the "maxim of broadened thinking" ("think from the standpoint of everyone else").[106] To "think for oneself" ultimately involves freeing oneself from contingent, heteronomous interests and attempting to construct a tribunal acceptable to all free, reasoning beings. This is the step which Foucault, good Nietzschean that he was, was unwilling to take.

In the last interview before his death he stated, "The search for a form of morality that would be acceptable to everyone — in the sense that everyone would have to submit to it — strikes me as catastrophic."[107] He did not ask whether the path opened by Kant — a law which free subjects, reasoning together, *agree to apply to themselves* — would be equally "catastrophic." It is here that a critique of Foucault's work might properly begin.

Notes

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1. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Vintage, 1973), 340–343.

2. Michel Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?," in *The Foucault Reader,* ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 46.

3. Ibid., 32.

4. Michel Foucault, "Kant on Enlightenment and Revolution," trans. Colin Gordon in *Economy and Society* 15, no. 1 (1986): 96.

5. Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization,* trans. Richard Howard (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 269.

6. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction,* trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 35.

7. Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic,* trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Vintage Books, 1975), 195–197; Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish,* trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 200–209.

8. Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" 42–43. In an interview from the same period he criticized the attempted "blackmail of all criticism of reason and every critical test of the history of rationality so that one either recognizes reason or casts it into irrationalism — as if it were not possible to write a rational criticism of rationality." See Foucault, "How Much Does it Cost for Reason to Tell the Truth," in *Foucault Live,* ed. Sylvère Lotringer, trans. John Johnston (New York: Semiotext(e), 1989), 242. Foucault's 1979 Tanner Lecture "Omnes et Singulatim: Towards a Critique of 'Political Reason'" likewise begins with the assertion that he is not going to "try" reason, since "such a trial would trap us into playing the arbitrary and boring part of either the rationalist or the irrationalist." See *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values,* vol. 2 (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1981), 226.

9. Jürgen Habermas, "Taking Aim at the Heart of the Present," in *Foucault: A Critical Reader,* ed. David Couzens Hoy (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 106.

10. Ibid., 108.

11. Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity,* trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), 238–293.

12. Prior to Habermas's critique of Foucault, the argument that Foucault's critique of power relations presupposes the normative foundations which these very same critiques call into question had been elaborated by Nancy Fraser, "Foucault on Modern Power: Empirical Insights and Normative Confusions", *Praxis International* 1, no. 3 (1981): 272–287, and Charles Taylor, "Foucault on Freedom and Truth," *Political Theory* 12, no. 2 (1984): 152–183. For discussions which for the most part follow Habermas's critique see Dieter Freundlieb, "Rationalism v. Irrationalism? Habermas' Response to Foucault," *Inquiry* 31: 171–92, and Steven K. White, "Foucault's Challenge to Critical Theory," *American Political Science Review* 80, no. 2 (1986): 419–432.

13. Richard Bernstein, "Foucault: Critique as a Philosophic Ethos," in *Zwischenbetrachtungen im Prozess der Aufklärung. Jürgen Habermas Zum 60. Geburtstag,* ed. Honneth, McCarthy, Offe, Wellmer (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1989) pp. 395, 425.

14. Thomas McCarthy, "The Critique of Impure Reason: Foucault and the Frankfurt School," *Political Theory* 18, no. 3 (1990): 463. McCarthy, like Fraser before him, assumes that these contradictions affect only the normative bases of Foucault's studies; few historians are so sanguine about Foucault's "empirical insights." See, for example, H. C. Erik Midelfort, "Madness and Civilization in Early Modern Europe: A Reappraisal of Michel Foucault," in *After the Reformation: Essays in Honor of J. H. Hexter,* ed. Barbara C. Malamont (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), 247–265.

15. To be sure, there are others who see Habermas's criticisms as simply missing the point. See, for example, the essay by Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow,

"What is Maturity? Habermas and Foucault on 'What is Enlightenment?'" in Hoy, *Foucault: A Critical Reader,* 109–122. But this essay concentrates on Habermas's earliest formulations of his account of communicative competence and gives little attention to either *The Theory of Communicative Action* or to the extended critique of Foucault in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity.*

16. Foucault's extensive involvement with Kant's essay is noted by Colin Gordon, "Question, Ethos, Event: Foucault on Kant and Enlightenment," *Economy and Society* 15, no. 1 (1986): 71–72. Foucault's interest in Kant himself, of course, goes back even further. He first read Kant at the Sorbonne under the Heidegger scholar Jean Beufret. Foucault translated Kant's *Anthropology* (Paris: Libraire Philosophique J. Vrin, 1964) as part of his (still unpublished) *thèse complémentaire* on the significance of anthropology in Kant's critical philosophy. Ian Hacking has noted that the discussion of Kant in *The Order of Things* had its origins in Foucault's thesis. See Hacking, "Self-Improvement" in Hoy, *Foucault: A Critical Reader,* 238.

17. Foucault, "What is Enlightenment," 42.

18. Michel Foucault, "Un Cours Inedit," *Magazine littéraire,* no. 207 (1984): 35–39. Translated by Colin Gordon as "Kant on Enlightenment and Revolution"; see note 4.

19. Michel Foucault, "Qu'est-ce-que la critique [Critique et *Aufklärung*]," Compte rendu de la séance du 27 mai 1978, *Bulletin de la Société française de Philosophie* 84 (1990): 35–63. Translation forthcoming in *What Is Enlightenment?: Eighteenth Century Answers and Twentieth Century Questions,* ed. James Schmidt (Berkeley: University of California Press).

20. In addition to these three lectures on Kant's lecture, see his brief discussion in his introduction to the English translation of Georges Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological;* his interview with Gerard Raulet, "How Much Does it Cost to Tell the Truth?" in *Foucault Live,* 240–243; and the essay "The Subject and Power," printed as an afterword in Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 215–216.

21. Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author?," trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon, in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 131–138.

22. Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que la critique," 36.

23. See Foucault, "Omnes et Singulatim," 227 and Foucault, "Governmentality," in *Ideology and Consciousness* 6 (Autumn 1979): 20

24. Foucault, "Omnes et Singulatim," 239.

25. For a contrast of "disciplinary power" with more conventional notions of sovereignty, see Michel Foucault, "Two Lectures" in *Power/Knowledge,* ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 105–108.

26. Ibid., 98.

27. Foucault, "Truth and Power," in *Power/Knowledge,* 119.

28. See the interview with Pasquale Pasquino, "Clarifications on the Question of Power" in *Foucault Live,* 187.

29. Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que la critique," 37–38.

30. Ibid., 38.

31. Ibid., 38–39.

32. Ibid., 39.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid. Throughout this discussion Foucault inverts some of the more familiar formulations of *Discipline and Punish.* For example, the account of critique as a "thoughtful indocility" can be juxtaposed to the discussion of how disciplinary institutions produce "docile bodies" which thoughtlessly take up the positions for which they were designed (*Discipline and Punish* pp. 135–169). If *Discipline and Punish* can be read as a genealogy of shaping and disciplining of the modern subject, the analysis of the notion of critique suggests the need to complement this analysis with an account of the resistance this process spawned.

35. Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que la critique," 40.

36. Ibid., 41.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid., 42

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid., 43. The distinction between French and German responses to the question "What is Enlightenment?" is also discussed in Foucault's Preface to Canguilhem's *The Normal and the Pathological,* xi, and his 1983 interview with Gerard Raulet (*Foucault Live,* 240).

41. Foucault made a similar point in his 1966 review of the French translation of Ernst Cassirer's *Philosophy of Enlightenment,* a review which began by pondering the question of why it had taken so long for the book to be translated into French. See "Une histoire restée muette," *La Quinzaine littéraire,* no. 8 (July 1, 1966): 3.

42. Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que la critique," 44.

43. *Foucault Live,* 241–242. Foucault's most extensive discussion of the work of Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse may be found in his 1978 interview with Duccio Trombadori, *Colloqui con Foucault* (Salerno: Cooperative editrice, 1981). While expressing admiration for their analysis of the problem of how enlightenment turns into domination, he characterizes their work as still concerned with the "alienation" of man from himself, while he sees himself as concerned with "the destruction of that which we are and the creation of a totally different thing" (quoted from the unpublished, edited French transcript, p. 75). There is nothing in this interview to indicate that Foucault had any familiarity with Habermas's work at this time.

44. Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que la critique," 45

45. Ibid., 46.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid.

48. At the close of the 1978 essay he had already suggested that perhaps he should have reposed the question "What is critique?" as "What is Enlightenment?" See Foucault, "Qu'est-ce que la critique," 53.

49. Foucault's discussion of the circumstances surrounding the writing of Kant's essay has not been reproduced in the published version. For a discussion of the context of Kant's essay, see James Schmidt, "The Question of Enlightenment: Kant, Mendelssohn, and the *Mittwochsgesellschaft,*" *Journal of the History of Ideas* 50, no. 2: 269–292.

50. Foucault, "Kant on Enlightenment and Revolution," 88–90.

51. Ibid., 89.

52. Ibid., 90.

53. See Lewis White Beck, "Kant and the Right of Revolution," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 32 (1971): 411–422; Sidney Axin, "Kant, Authority, and the French Revolution," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 32 (1971): 423–432; Peter Burg, "Die Französische Revolution als Heilgeschehen," in *Materialien zu Kants Rechtsphilosophie,* ed. Zwi Batscha (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1976), 237–268; Iring Fetscher, "Immanuel Kant und die Französische Revolution," in ibid. 269–290.

54. Foucault, "Kant on Enlightenment and Revolution," 88.

55. Kant, *The Contest of the Faculties,* in *Political Writings,* 177–190.

56. Kant, *Political Writings,* 181.

57. Kant, *Political Writings,* 182–183.

58. Foucault, "Kant on Enlightenment and Revolution," 95. Kant did deal with the question of legitimacy in *Theory and Practice* (*Political Writings,* 81–86), in footnotes to *Perpetual Peace* (*Political Writings,* 118–119), and in a footnote to *The Contest of the Faculties* (*Political Writings,* 183) — but Foucault is correct that it is not the primary issue at stake in the discussion of the French Revolution in *The Contest of the Faculties.*

59. Michel Foucault, "Iran: The Spirit of a World Without Spirit," trans. Alan Sheridan, in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings 1977–1984,* ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman (New York: Routledge, 1988), 211.

60. Ibid., 212

61. Ibid., 212–213.

62. Ibid., 214.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid., 218.

65 Michel Foucault, "Is it Useless to Revolt?" trans. James Bernauer, *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 8 (1987): 7.

66. Ibid., 8.

67. Foucault, "Iran," 215.

68. Foucault, "Is it Useless to Revolt?" 6.

69. Foucault, "Iran," 218.

70. Foucault, "Is it Useless to Revolt," 8.

71. Ibid., 9.

72. Foucault, "Iran," 224. Cf. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science,* sect. 335: "We, however, *want to become those we are* — humans beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves" (Walter Kaufman translation).

73. Foucault, "Kant on Enlightenment and Revolution," 95.

74. Ibid.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid.

77. Ibid., 96.

78. *Foucault Reader,* 38.

79. *Foucault Reader,* 39.

80. Jürgen Habermas, "Modernity versus Postmodernity," *New German Critique* 22 (1981): 13.

81. Nancy Fraser, "Michel Foucault: A 'Young Conservative'?," *Ethics* 96 (1985): 165.

82. Habermas, "Modernity versus Postmodernity," 13. In his subsequent discussion in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity,* Habermas rearranges this lineage. Heidegger and Derrida now represent one side of the Nietzsche legacy — that of "the initiate-critic of metaphysics who pretends to a unique kind of knowledge and pursues the rise of the philosophy of the subject back to its pre-Socratic beginnings" — while Bataille, Lacan, and Foucault represent the other alternative — the "sceptical scholar who wants to unmask the perversion of the will to power, the revolt of reactionary forces, and the emergence of a subject-centered reason by using anthropological, psychological, and historical methods." Habermas, *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity,* 97. While Habermas has little patience for the first of these traditions, his treatment of Foucault in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* is a good deal more respectful than that accorded him in "Modernity and Postmodernity."

83. *Foucault Reader,* 39.

84. *Foucault Reader,* 35.

85. Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays,* trans. Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidon Press, 1964), 13. Habermas makes use of the same definition in "Modernity versus Postmodernity," 4. See also the discussion of Baudelaire in *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity,* 8–10.

86. Baudelaire, *Painter of Modern Life,* 13. See also the discussion of the significance of the fragmentary and particular in analyses of modernity in David Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity* (Cambridge: MIT Press), 1986.

87. Baudelaire, *Painter of Modern Life,* 12

88. *Foucault Reader,* 41.

89. Ibid.

90. Baudelaire, *Painter of Modern Life,* 26–29.

91. Ibid., 28.

92. *Foucault Reader,* 42–43. Note that Foucault has shifted his focus from Guys himself — Baudelaire's concern — to the dandy.

93. *Foucault Reader,* 38.

94. Hacking, "Self-Improvement," 238.

95. *Foucault Reader,* 48.

96. Ibid., 50.

97. McCarthy, "Critique of Impure Reason," 463.

98. See James Miller, "Carnivals of Atrocity: Foucault, Nietzsche, Cruelty," *Political Theory* 18 (1990): 478.

99. For a discussion, see Thomas E. Wartenberg, *The Forms of Power: From Domination to Transformation* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press), 1990.

100. Hacking, "Self-Improvement," 238.

101. Bernstein, "Critique as a Philosophic Ethos," 421 (italics in original).

102. Christian Garve, *Versuche über verschiedene Gesenstände aus der Moral, der Literatur, und dem gesellschaftlichen Leben* (1792), reprinted in Dieter Henrich, ed., *Kant, Gentz, Rehberg: Über Theorie und Praxis* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1967), 134–138.

103. Immanuel Kant, "On the Common Saying: 'This May be True in Theory, But It Does Not Apply in Practice," in *Political Writings,* 67.

104. Hacking, "Self-Improvement," 239

105. Onora O'Neill, *Constructions of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 58–59. For a discussion of the antifoundationalism of Kant's ethics, see pp. 18–19, 56, 64.

106. *Critique of Judgment* §40.

107. "The Return of Morality," in *Foucault Live,* 330.

13

Foldings, or the Inside of Thought (Subjectivation)

Gilles Deleuze

What happened during the fairly long silence following *The History of Sexuality*? Perhaps Foucault felt slightly uneasy about the book: had he not trapped himself within the concept of power relations? He himself put forward the following objection: "That's just like you, always with the same *incapacity to cross the line,* to pass over to the other side . . . it is always the same choice, for the side of power, for what power says or of what it causes to be said."[1] And no doubt his own reply was that "the most intense point of lives, the one where their energy is concentrated, is precisely where they clash with power, struggle with it, endeavor to utilize its forces or to escape its traps." He might equally have added that the diffuse centers of power do not exist without points of resistance that are in some way primary; and that power does not take life as its objective without revealing or giving rise to a life that resists power; and finally that the force of the outside continues to disrupt the diagrams and turn them upside down.

But what happens, on the other hand, if the transversal relations of resistance continue to become restratified, and to encounter or even construct knots of power? Already the ultimate failure of the prison movement, after 1970, had saddened Foucault, on top of which other events, on a world scale, must have saddened him even more. If power is constitutive of truth, how can we conceive of a "power of truth" which would no longer be the truth of power, a truth that would release transversal lines of resistance and not integral lines of power? How can we "cross the line"? And, if we must

attain a life that is the power of the outside, what tells us that this outside is not a terrifying void and that this life, which seems to put up a resistance, is not just the simple distribution within the void of "slow, partial and progressive" deaths? We can no longer even say that death transforms life into destiny, an "indivisible and decisive" event, but rather that death becomes multiplied and differentiated in order to bestow on life the particular features, and consequently the truths, which life believes arise from resisting death. What remains, then, if not to pass through all these deaths preceding the great limit of death itself, deaths which even afterwards continue? Life henceforth consists only of taking one's place, or every place, in the cortège of a "One dies."

It is in this sense that Bichat broke with the classical conception of death, as a decisive moment or indivisible event, and broke with it in two ways, simultaneously presenting death as being coextensive with life and as something made up of a multiplicity of partial and particular deaths. When Foucault analyzes Bichat's theories, his tone demonstrates sufficiently that he is concerned with something other than an epistemological analysis:[2] he is concerned with a conception of death, and few men more than Foucault died in a way commensurate with their conception of death. This force of life that belonged to Foucault was always thought through and lived out as a multiple death in the manner of Bichat.

What remains, then, except an anonymous life that shows up only when it clashes with power, argues with it, exchanges "brief and strident words," and then fades back into the night, what Foucault called "the life of infamous men," whom he asked us to admire by virtue of "their misfortune, rage or uncertain madness"?[3] Strangely, implausibly, it is this "infamy" which he claimed for himself: "My point of departure was those sorts of particles endowed with an energy that is all the greater for their being small and difficult to spot." This culminated in *The Use of Pleasure*'s searing phrase: "to get free of oneself."[4]

The History of Sexuality explicitly closes on a doubt. If at the end of it Foucault finds himself in an impasse, this is not because of his conception of power but rather because he found the impasse to be where power itself places us, in both our lives and our thoughts, as we run up against it in our smallest truths. This could be resolved

only if the outside were caught up in a movement that would snatch it away from the void and pull it back from death. This would be like a new axis, different from the axes of both knowledge and power. Could this axis be the place where a sense of serenity would be finally attained and life truly affirmed? In any case, it is not an axis that annuls all others but one that was already working at the same time as the others, and prevented them from closing on the impasse. Perhaps this third axis was present from the beginning in Foucault (just as power was present from the beginning in knowledge). But it could emerge only by assuming a certain distance, and so being able to circle back on the other two. Foucault felt it necessary to carry out a general reshuffle in order to unravel this path which was so tangled up in the others that it remained hidden: it is this recentering which Foucault puts forward in the general introduction to *The Use of Pleasure.*

But how was this new dimension present from the beginning? Up until now, we have encountered three dimensions: the relations which have been formed or formalized along certain strata (Knowledge); the relations between forces to be found at the level of the diagram (Power); and the relation with the outside, that absolute relation, as Blanchot says, which is also a nonrelation (Thought). Does this mean that there is no inside? Foucault continually submits interiority to a radical critique. But is there *an inside that lies deeper than any internal world,* just as the outside is farther away than any external world? The outside is not a fixed limit but a moving matter animated by peristaltic movement, folds and foldings that together make up an inside: they are not something other than the outside, but precisely the inside *of* the outside. *The Order of Things* developed this theme: if thought comes from outside, and remains attached to the outside, how come the outside does not flood into the inside, as the elements that thought does not and cannot think of? The unthought is therefore not external to thought but lies at its very heart, as that impossibility of thinking which doubles or hollows out the outside.[5]

The classical age had already stated that there was an inside of thought, the unthought, when it invoked the finite, the different orders of infinity. And from the nineteenth century on it is more the dimensions of finitude which fold the outside and constitute a

"depth," a "density withdrawn into itself," an inside to life, labor and language, in which man is embedded, if only to sleep, but conversely which is also itself embedded in man "as a living being, a working individual or a speaking subject."[6] Either it is the fold of the infinite, or the constant folds [*replis*] of finitude which curve the outside and constitute the inside. *The Birth of the Clinic* had already shown how the clinic brought the body up to the surface, but equally how pathological anatomy subsequently introduced into this body deep foldings which did not resuscitate the old notion of interiority but constituted instead the new inside of this outside.[7]

The inside as an operation of the outside: in all his work Foucault seems haunted by this theme of an inside which is merely the fold of the outside, as if the ship were a folding of the sea. On the subject of the Renaissance madman who is put to sea in his boat, Foucault wrote:

> he is put in the interior of the exterior, and inversely . . . a prisoner in the midst of what is the freest, the openest of routes: bound fast at the infinite crossroads. He is the Passenger *par excellence:* that is, the prisoner of the passage.[8]

Thought has no other being than this madman himself. As Blanchot says of Foucault: "He encloses the outside, that is, constitutes it in an interiority of expectation or exception."[9]

Or, rather, the theme which has always haunted Foucault is that of the double. But the double is never a projection of the interior; on the contrary, it is an interiorization of the outside. It is not a doubling of the One, but a redoubling of the Other. It is not a reproduction of the Same, but a repetition of the Different. It is not the emanation of an "I", but something that places in immanence an always other or a Non-self. It is never the other who is a double in the doubling process, it is a self that lives me as the double of the other: I do not encounter myself on the outside, I find the other in me ("it is always concerned with showing how the Other, the Distant, is also the Near and the Same").[10] It resembles exactly the invagination of a tissue in embryology, or the act of doubling in sewing: twist, fold, stop, and so on.

The Archaeology of Knowledge showed, in its most paradoxical pages, how one phrase was the repetition of another, and above all how one

statement repeated or doubled "something else" that was barely distinguishable from it (the transmission of letters on the keyboard, AZERT). Equally, the books on power showed how the stratified forms repeated relations between forces that were barely distinguishable from one another, and how history was the doubling of an emergence. This permanent theme in Foucault had already been analysed in depth in *Raymond Roussel.* For what Raymond Roussel had discovered was the phrase of the outside, its repetition in a second phrase, the minuscule difference between the two (the "snag" [*l'accroc*]), and the twisting and doubling from one to the other. The snag is no longer the accident of the tissue but the new rule on the basis of which the external tissue is twisted, invaginated and doubled. The "facultative" rule, or the transmission of chance, a dice-throw. They are, says Foucault, games of repetition, of difference, and of the doubling that "links them."

This is not the only time Foucault presents in a literary and humorous way what could be demonstrated by epistemology or linguistics, which are both serious disciplines. *Raymond Roussel* has knitted or sewn together all the meanings of the word *doublure,* in order to show how the inside was always the folding of a presupposed outside.[11] And Roussel's last method, the proliferation of parentheses inside one another, multiplies the foldings within the sentence. This is why Foucault's book on Roussel is important, and no doubt the path it traces is itself double. This does not at all mean that the primacy can be reversed: the inside will always be the doubling *of* the outside. But it does mean that either, like Roussel recklessly searching for death, we want to undo the doubling and pull away the folds "with a studied gesture," in order to reach the outside and its "stifling hollowness"; or like Leiris, who is more wise and prudent but none the less in another sense incredibly audacious, we follow the folds, reinforce the doublings from snag to snag, and surround ourselves with foldings that form an "absolute memory," in order to make the outside into a vital, recurring element.[12] As *The History of Madness* put it: to be put in the interior of the exterior, and inversely. Perhaps Foucault has always oscillated between the two forms of the double, already characterized at this early stage as the choice between death or memory. Perhaps he chose death, like Roussel, but not without having passed through the detours or foldings of memory.

Perhaps he even had to go back to the Greeks. In this way even the most impassioned problem would be given a context that would restore a sense of calm. If folding or doubling haunts all Foucault's work, but surfaces only at a late stage, this is because he gave the name of "absolute memory" to a new dimension which had to be distinguished both from relations between forces or power-relations and from stratified forms of knowledge. Greek education presents new power-relations which are very different from the old imperial forms of education and materialize in a Greek light as a system of visibility, and in a Greek logos as a system of statements. We can therefore speak of a diagram of power which extends across all qualified forms of knowledge: "governing oneself, managing one's estate, and participating in the administration of the city were three practices of the same type," and Xenophon "shows the continuity and isomorphism between the three 'arts,' as well as the chronological sequence by which they were to be practised in the life of an individual."[13] However, not even this marks the great novelty of the Greeks. Such novelty ultimately emerges thanks to a double unhooking or "differentiation" [*décrochage*]: when the "exercises that enabled one to govern oneself" *become detached* both from power as a relation between forces, and from knowledge as a stratified form, or "code" of virtue. On the one hand there is a "relation to oneself" that consciously derives from one's relation with others; on the other there is equally a "self-constitution" that consciously derives from the moral code as a rule for knowledge.[14]

This derivative or differentiation must be understood in the sense in which the *relation to oneself* assumes an independent status. It is as if the relations of the outside folded back to create a doubling, allow a relation to oneself to emerge, and constitute an inside which is hollowed out and develops its own unique dimension: "enkrateia," the relation to oneself that is self-mastery, "is a power that one brought to bear on oneself *in* the power that one exercised over others" (how could one claim to govern others if one could not govern oneself?) to the point where the relation to oneself becomes "a principle of internal regulation" in relation to the constituent powers of politics, the family, eloquence, games and even virtue.[15] This is the Greek version of the snag and the doubling: a differentiation that leads to a folding, a reflection.

This, at least, is Foucault's version of the novelty of the Greeks. And this version appears very important in both its detail and its superficial modesty. What the Greeks did is not to reveal Being or unfold the Open in a world-historical gesture. According to Foucault they did a great deal less, or more.[16] They bent the outside, through a series of practical exercises. The Greeks are the first doubling. Force is what belongs to the outside, since it is essentially a relation between other forces: it is inseparable in itself from the power to affect other forces (spontaneity) and to be affected by others (receptivity). But what comes about as a result is *a relation which force has with itself, a power to affect itself, an affect of self on self.* Following the Greek diagram, only free men can dominate others ("free agents" and the "agonistic relations" between them are diagrammatic characteristics).[17] But how could they dominate others if they could not dominate themselves? The domination of others must be doubled by a domination of oneself. The relation with others must be doubled by a relation with oneself. The obligatory rules for power must be doubled by facultative rules for the free man who exercises power. As moral codes here and there execute the diagram (in the city, the family, tribunals, games, etc.), a "subject" must be isolated which differentiates itself from the code and no longer has an internal dependence on it.

This is what the Greeks did: they folded force, even though it still remained force. They made it relate back to itself. Far from ignoring interiority, individuality or subjectivity they invented the subject, but only as a derivative or the product of a "subjectivation." They discovered the "aesthetic existence" — the doubling or relation with oneself, the facultative rule of free man.[18] (If we do not regard this derivation as being a new dimension, then we must say that there is no sense of subjectivity in the Greeks, especially if we look for it on the level of obligatory rules.) Foucault's fundamental idea is that of a dimension of subjectivity derived from power and knowledge without being dependent on them.

In another way it is *The Use of Pleasure* which in several respects differentiates from the previous books. On the one hand it invokes a long period of time that begins with the Greeks and continues up to the present day by way of Christianity, while the previous books considered short periods, between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. On the other it discovers the relation to oneself, as a new

dimension that cannot be reduced to the power-relations and relations between forms of knowledge that were the object of previous books: the whole system has to be reorganized. Finally, there is a break with *The History of Sexuality,* which studied sexuality from the double viewpoint of power and knowledge; now the relation to oneself is laid bare, but its links with sexuality remain uncertain.[20] Consequently, the first step in a complete reorganization is already there: does the relation to oneself have an elective affinity with sexuality, to the point of renewing the project of a "history of sexuality"?

The reply is a vigorous one: just as power-relations can be affirmed only by being carried out, so the relation to oneself, which bends these power relations, can be established only by being carried out. And it is in sexuality that it is established or carried out. Perhaps not immediately; for the constitution of an inside or interiority is alimentary before it is sexual.[21] But here again, what is it that leads sexuality to "differentiate" itself gradually from alimentary considerations and become the place in which the relation to oneself is enacted? The reason is that sexuality, as it is lived out by the Greeks, incarnates in the female the receptive element of force, and in the male the active or spontaneous element.[22] From then on, the free man's relation to himself as self-determination will concern sexuality in three ways: in the simple form of a "Dietetics" of pleasures, one governs oneself in order to be capable of actively governing one's body; in the composed form of a domestic "Economics," one governs oneself in order to be capable of governing one's wife, who in turn may attain a good receptivity; in the doubled form of an "Erotics" of boys, one governs oneself in order that the boy also learns to govern himself, to be active and to resist the power of others.[23] The Greeks not only invented the relation to oneself, they linked it to sexuality, composing and doubling it within the latter's terms. In short, the Greeks laid the foundation for an encounter between the relation to oneself and sexuality.

The redistribution or reorganization takes place all on its own, or at least over a long period. For the relation to oneself will not remain the withdrawn and reserved zone of the free man, a zone independent of any "institutional and social system." The relation to oneself will be understood in terms of power-relations and relations of knowledge. It will be reintegrated into these systems from which it was

originally derived. The individual is coded or recoded within a "moral" knowledge, and above all he becomes the stake in a power struggle and is diagrammatized.

The fold therefore seems unfolded, and the subjectivation of the free man is transformed into subjection: on the one hand it involves being "subject to someone else by control and dependence," with all the processes of individuation and modulation which power installs, acting on the daily life and the interiority of those it calls its subjects; on the other it makes the subject "tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge," through all the techniques of moral and human sciences that go to make up a knowledge of the subject.[24] Simultaneously, sexuality becomes organized around certain focal points of power, gives rise to a "scientia sexualis," and is integrated into an agency of "power-knowledge," namely Sex (here Foucault returns to the analysis given in *The History of Sexuality*).

Must we conclude from this that the new dimension hollowed out by the Greeks disappears, and falls back on the two axes of knowledge and power? In that case we could go back to the Greeks and find a relation to oneself based on free individuality. But this is obviously not the case. There will always be a relation to oneself which resists codes and powers; the relation to onself is even one of the origins of these points of resistance which we have already discussed. For example, it would be wrong to reduce Christian moralities to their attempts at codification, and the pastoral power which they invoke, without also taking into account the "spiritual and ascetic movements" or subjectivation that continued to develop before the Reformation (there are collective subjectivations).[25] It is not even enough to say that the latter resist the former; for there is a perpetual communication between them, whether in terms of struggle or of composition. What must be stated, then, is that subjectivation, the relation to oneself, continues to create itself, but by transforming itself and changing its nature to the point where the Greek mode is a distant memory. Recuperated by power-relations and relations of knowledge, the relation to oneself is continually reborn, elsewhere and otherwise.

The most general formula of the relation to oneself is the affect of self by self, or folded force. Subjectivation is created by folding. Only, there are four foldings, four folds of subjectivation, like the

rivers of the inferno. The first concerns the material part of ourselves which is to be surrounded and enfolded: for the Greeks this was the body and its pleasures, the "aphrodisia"; but for Christians this will be the flesh and its desires, desire itself, a completely different substantial modality. The second, properly speaking, is the fold of the relation between forces; for it is always according to a particular rule that the relation between forces is bent back in order to become a relation to oneself, though it certainly makes a difference whether or not the rule in question is natural, divine, rational, or aesthetic, and so on. The third is the fold of knowledge, or the fold of truth in so far as it constitutes the relation of truth to our being, and of our being to truth, which will serve as the formal condition for any kind of knowledge: a subjectivation of knowledge that is always different, whether in the Greeks and the Christians, or in Plato, Descartes, or Kant. The fourth is the fold of the outside itself, the ultimate fold: it is this that constitutes what Blanchot called an "interiority of expectation" from which the subject, in different ways, hopes for immortality, eternity, salvation, freedom or death or detachment. These four folds are like the final or formal cause, the acting material cause of subjectivity or interiority as a relation to oneself.[26] These folds are eminently variable, and moreover have different rhythms whose variations constitute irreducible modes of subjectivation. They operate "beneath the codes and rules" of knowledge and power and are apt to unfold and merge with them, but not without new foldings being created in the process.

On each occasion the relation to oneself is destined to encounter sexuality, according to a modality that corresponds to the mode of subjectivation. This is because the spontaneity and receptivity of force will no longer be distributed on the basis of an active and a passive role, as it was for the Greeks, but rather as in the completely different case of the Christians, on the basis of a bisexual structure. From the viewpoint of a general confrontation, what variations exist between the Greek sense of the body and the pleasures, and the Christian sense of flesh and desire? Can it be that Plato remains at the level of the body and the pleasures to be found in the first folds, but is already beginning to raise himself to the level of Desire to be found in the third fold, by folding truth back into the lover, and is consequently

isolating a new process of subjectivation that leads to a "desiring subject" (and no longer to a subject of pleasures)?[27]

And what can we ultimately say about our own contemporary modes and our modern relation to oneself? *What are our four folds?* If it is true that power increasingly informs our daily lives, our interiority and our individuality; if it has become individualizing; if it is true that knowledge itself has become increasingly individuated, forming the hermeneutics and codification of the desiring subject, what remains for our subjectivity? There never "remains" anything of the subject, since he is to be created on each occasion, like a focal point of resistance, on the basis of the folds which subjectivize knowledge and bend each power. Perhaps modern subjectivity rediscovers the body and its pleasures, as opposed to a desire that has become too subjugated by Law? Yet this is not a return to the Greeks, since there never is a return.[28] The struggle for a modern subjectivity passes through a resistance to the two present forms of subjection, the one consisting of individualizing ourselves on the basis of constraints of power, the other of attracting each individual to a known and recognized identity, fixed once and for all. The struggle for subjectivity presents itself, therefore, as the right to difference, variation and metamorphosis.[29] (Here we are multiplying the questions, since we are touching on the unpublished manuscript of *Les aveux de la chair* [the projected fourth volume of *The History of Sexuality*], and beyond into Foucault's very last topics of research.)

In *The Use of Pleasure,* Foucault does not discover the subject. In fact he had already defined it as a derivative, a function derived from the statement. But by defining it now as a derivative of the outside, conditioned by the fold, he draws it out fully and gives it an irreducible dimension. So we have the basis for a reply to the most general question: How can we name this new dimension, this relation to oneself that is neither knowledge nor power? Is the affect of self by self pleasure, or desire? Or do we call it "individual conduct," the conduct of pleasure or desire? We shall find the exact term only if we note the limits which this third dimension assumes over long periods of time. The appearance of a folding of the outside can seem unique to Western development. Perhaps the Orient does not present such a phenomenon, and the line of the outside continues to float across a stifling hollowness: in that case asceticism would be a

culture of annihilation or an effort to breathe in such a void, without any particular production of subjectivity.[30]

The conditions for a bending of forces seem to arise with the agonistic relationship between free men: that is, with the Greeks. It is here that force folds back on itself in relation with the other force. But even if we made the Greeks the origin of the process of subjectivation, it still occupies a long period of time in the run-up to the present day. This chronology is all the more remarkable given that Foucault examined the diagrams of power as places of mutation, and the archives of knowledge, over short periods of time.[31] If we ask why *The Use of Pleasure* suddenly introduces a long period of time, perhaps the simplest reason is that we have all too quickly forgotten the old powers that are no longer exercised, and the old sciences that are no longer useful, but in moral matters we are still weighed down with old beliefs which we no longer even believe, and we continue to produce ourselves as a subject on the basis of old modes which do not correspond to our problems. This is what led the film director Antonioni to say that we are sick with Eros . . . Everything takes place as if the modes of subjectivation had a long life, and we continue to play at being Greeks or Christians, and to indulge in a taste for trips down memory lane.

But there is a deeper positive reason. The folding or doubling is itself a Memory: the "absolute memory" or memory of the outside, beyond the brief memory inscribed in strata and archives, beyond the relics remaining in the diagrams. The aesthetic life of the Greeks had already essentially prompted a memory of the future, and very quickly the processes of subjectivation were accompanied by writings that were real memories, "hypomnemata."[32] Memory is the real name of the relation to oneself, or the affect on self by self. According to Kant, time was the form in which the mind affected itself, just as space was the form in which the mind was affected by something else: time was therefore "auto-affection" and made up the essential structure of subjectivity.[33] But time as subject, or rather subjectivation, is called memory. Not that brief memory that comes afterwards and is the opposite of forgetting, but the "absolute memory" which doubles the present and the outside and is one with forgetting, since it is itself endlessly forgotten and reconstituted: its fold, in fact, merges with the unfolding, because the latter remains present within

the former as the thing that is folded. Only forgetting (the unfolding) recovers what is folded in memory (and in the fold itself).

There is a final rediscovery of Heidegger by Foucault. Memory is contrasted not with forgetting but with the forgetting of forgetting, which dissolves us into the outside and constitutes death. On the other hand, as long as the outside is folded an inside is coextensive with it, as memory is coextensive with forgetting. It is this coextensive nature which is life, a long period of time. Time becomes a subject because it is the folding of the outside and, as such, forces every present into forgetting, but preserves the whole of the past within memory: forgetting is the impossibility of return, and memory is the necessity of renewal. For a long time Foucault thought of the outside as being an ultimate spatiality that was deeper than time; but in his late works he offers the possibility once more of putting time on the outside and thinking of the outside as being time, conditioned by the fold.[34]

It is on this point that the necessary confrontation between Foucault and Heidegger takes place: the "fold" has continued to haunt the work of Foucault, but finds its true dimension in his last research. In what ways is he similar to and different from Heidegger? We can evaluate them only by taking as our point of departure Foucault's break with phenomenology in the "vulgar" sense of the term: with intentionality. The idea that consciousness is directed towards the thing and gains significance in the world is precisely what Foucault refuses to believe. In fact intentionality is created in order to surpass any psychologism or naturalism, but it invents a new psychologism and a new naturalism to the point where, as Merleau-Ponty himself said, it can hardly be distinguished from a "learning" process. It restores the psychologism that synthesizes consciousness and significations, a naturalism of the "savage experience" and of the thing, of the aimless existence of the thing in the world.

This gives rise to Foucault's double challenge. Certainly, as long as we remain on the level of words and phrases we can believe in an intentionality through which consciousness is directed towards something and gains significance (as something significant); as long as we remain on the level of things and states of things we can believe in a "savage" experience that lets the thing wander aimlessly through

consciousness. But if phenomenology "places things in parenthesis," as it claims to do, this ought to push it beyond words and phrases towards *statements*, and beyond things and states of things towards *visibilities*. But statements are not directed towards anything, since they are not related to a thing any more than they express a subject but refer only to a language, a language-being, that gives them unique subjects and objects that satisfy particular conditions as immanent variables. And visibilities are not deployed in a savage world already opened up to a primitive (pre-predicative) consciousness, but refer only to a light, a light-being, which gives them forms, proportions and perspectives that are immanent in the proper sense — that is, free of any intentional gaze.[35] Neither language nor light will be examined in the areas that relate them to one another (designation, signification, the signifying process of language; a physical environment, a tangible or intelligible world) but rather in the irreducible dimension that gives both of them as separate and self-sufficient entities: "there is" light, and "there is" language. All intentionality collapses in the gap that opens up between these two monads, or in the "nonrelation" between seeing and speaking.

This is Foucault's major achievement: the conversion of phenomenology into epistemology. For seeing and speaking means knowing [*savoir*], but we do not see what we speak about, nor do we speak about what we see; and when we see a pipe we shall always say (in one way or another): "this is not a pipe," as though intentionality denied itself, and collapsed into itself. Everything is knowledge, and this is the first reason why there is no "savage experience": there is nothing beneath or prior to knowledge. But knowledge is irreducibly double, since it involves speaking and seeing, language and light, which is the reason why there is no intentionality.

But it is here that everything begins, because for its part phenomenology, in order to cast off the psychologism and naturalism that continued to burden it, itself surpassed intentionality as the relation between consciousness and its object (being [*l'étant* or *Seinde*]). And in Heidegger, and then in Merleau-Ponty, the surpassing of intentionality tended towards Being [*L'Etre* or *Sein*], the fold of Being. From intentionality to the fold, from being to Being, from phenomenology to ontology. Heidegger's disciples taught us to what extent ontology was inseparable from the fold, since Being was precisely the

fold which it made with being; and that the unfolding of Being, as the inaugural gesture of the Greeks, was not the opposite of the fold but the fold itself, the pivotal point of the Open, the unity of the unveiling-veiling. It was still less obvious in what way this folding of Being, the fold of Being and being, replaced intentionality, if only to found it. It was Merleau-Ponty who showed us how a radical, "vertical" visibility was folded into a Self-seeing, and from that point on made possible the horizontal relation between a seeing and a seen.

An Outside, more distant than any exterior, is "twisted," "folded," and "doubled" by an Inside that is deeper than any interior, and alone creates the possibility of the derived relation between the interior and the exterior. It is even this twisting which defines "Flesh," beyond the body proper and its objects. In brief, the intentionality of being is surpassed by the fold of Being, Being as fold (Sartre, on the other hand, remained at the level of intentionality, because he was content to make "holes" in being, without reaching the fold of Being). Intentionality is still generated in a Euclidean space that prevents it from understanding itself, and must be surpassed by another, "topological," space which establishes contact between the Outside and the Inside, the most distant, the most deep.[36]

There is no doubt that Foucault found great theoretical inspiration in Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty for the theme that haunted him: the fold, or doubling. But he equally found a practical version of it in Raymond Roussel, for the latter raised an ontological Visibility, forever twisting itself into a "self-seeing" entity, on to a different dimension from that of the gaze or its objects.[37] We could equally link Heidegger to Jarry, to the extent that *pataphysics* presents itself precisely as a surpassing of metaphysics that is explicitly founded on the Being of the phenomenon. But if we take Jarry or Roussel in this way to be the realization of Heidegger's philosophy, does this not mean that the fold is carried off and set up in a completely different landscape, and so takes on a different meaning? We must not refuse to take Heidegger seriously, but we must rediscover the imperturbably serious side to Roussel (or Jarry). The serious ontological aspect needs a diabolical or phenomenological sense of humor.

In fact, we believe that the fold as doubling in Foucault will take on a completely new appearance while retaining its ontological im-

port. In the first place, according to Heidegger or Merleau-Ponty, the fold of being surpasses intentionality only to found the latter in a new dimension: this is why the Visible or the Open does not give us something to see without also providing something to speak, since the fold will constitute the Self-seeing element of sight only if it also constitutes the Self-speaking element of language, to the point where it is the same world that speaks itself in language and sees itself in sight. In Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, Light opens up a speaking no less than a seeing, as if signification haunted the visible which in turn murmured meaning.[38] This cannot be so in Foucault, for whom the light-Being refers only to visibilities, and language-Being to statements: the fold will not be able to refound an intentionality, since the latter disappears in the disjunction between the two parts of a knowledge that is never intentional.

If knowledge is constituted by two forms, how could a subject display any intentionality towards one object, since each form has its own objects and subjects?[39] Yet it must be able to ascribe a relation to the two forms which emerges from their "non-relation." Knowledge is Being, the first figure of Being, but Being lies between two forms. Is this not precisely what Heidegger called the "between-two" or Merleau-Ponty termed the "interlacing or chiasmus"? In fact, they are not at all the same thing. For Merleau-Ponty, the interlacing or between-two merges with the fold. But not for Foucault. There is an interlacing or intertwining of the visible and the articulable: it is the Platonic model of weaving that replaces intentionality. But this interlacing is in fact a stranglehold, or a battle between two implacable foes who are the forms of knowledge-Being: if you like it is an intentionality, but one that is reversible, has multiplied in both directions, and has become infinitesimal or microscopic. It is still not the fold of Being, but rather the interlacing of its two forms. It is still not a topology of the fold, but rather a strategy of the interlacing. Everything takes place as though Foucault were reproaching Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty for going too quickly. And what he finds in Roussel, in a different way again in Magritte, and what he could have found in yet another sense in Jarry, is the audiovisual battle, the double capture, the noise of words that conquered the visible, the fury of things that conquered the articulable.[40] In Foucault, there

has been a hallucinatory theme of Doubles and doubling that transforms any ontology.

But this double capture, which is constitutive of knowledge-Being, could not be created between two irreducible forms if the interlocking of opponents did not flow from an element that was itself informal, a pure relation between forces that emerges in the irreducible separation of forms. This is the source of the battle or the condition for its possible existence. This is the strategic domain of power, as opposed to the stratic domain of knowledge. From epistemology to strategy. This is another reason why there is no "savage" experience, since battles imply a strategy and any experience is caught up in relations of power. This is the second figure of Being, the "Possest," power-Being, as opposed to knowledge-Being. It is the informal forces or power-relations that set up relations "between" the two forms of formed knowledge. The two forms of knowledge-Being are forms of exteriority, since statements are dispersed in the one and visibilities in the other; but power-Being introduces us into a different element, an unformable and unformed Outside which gives rise to forces and their changing combinations. This shows that this second figure of Being is still not the fold. It is, rather, a floating line with no contours which is the only element that makes the two forms in battle communicate. The Heraclitean element has always gone deeper in Foucault than in Heidegger, for phenomenology is ultimately too pacifying and has blessed too many things.

Foucault therefore discovers the element that comes from outside: force. Like Blanchot, Foucault will speak less of the Open than of the Outside. For force is linked to force, but to the force of the outside, such that it is the outside that "explains" the exteriority of forms, both for each one and for their mutual relation. This accounts for the importance of Foucault's declaration that Heidegger always fascinated him, but that he could understand him only by way of Nietzsche and alongside Nietzsche (and not the other way round).[41] Heidegger is Nietzsche's potential, but not the other way round, and Nietzsche did not see his own potential fulfilled. It was necessary to recover force, in the Nietzschean sense, or power, in the very particular sense of "will to power," to discover this outside as limit, the last point before Being folds. Heidegger rushed things and folded too quickly, which was not desirable: this led to the deep ambiguity of

his technical and political ontology, a technique of knowledge and a politics of power. The fold of Being can come about only at the level of the third figure: can *force* fold so as to be self-action, the affect of self by self, such that the outside in itself constitutes a coextensive inside? What the Greeks did was not a miracle. Heidegger has a Renan side to him, with his idea of the Greek light or miracle.[42] In Foucault's opinion the Greeks did a lot less, or a lot more, depending on your choice. They folded force, discovered it was something that could be folded, and only by strategy, because they invented a relation between forces based on the rivalry between free men (the government of others through self-government, and so on). But as a force among forces man does not fold the forces that compose him without the outside folding itself, and creating a Self within man. It is this fold of Being which makes up the third figure when the forms are already interlocked and battle has already been joined: from this point Being no longer forms a "Sciest" or a "Possest," but a "Se-est," to the extent that the fold of the outside constitutes a Self, while the outside itself forms a coextensive inside. Only through a stratico-strategic interlocking do we reach the ontological fold.

These three dimensions — knowledge, power, and self — are irreducible, yet constantly imply one another. They are three "ontologies." Why does Foucault add that they are historical?[43] Because they do not set universal conditions. Knowledge-Being is determined by the two forms assumed at any moment by the visible and the articulable, and light and language in turn cannot be separated from "the unique and limited existence" which they have in a given stratum. Power-Being is determined within relations between forces which are themselves based on particular features that vary according to each age. And the self, self-Being, is determined by the process of subjectivation: by the places crossed by the fold (the Greeks have nothing universal about them). In brief, the conditions are never more general than the conditioned element, and gain their value from their particular historical status. The conditions are therefore not "apodictic" but problematic. Given certain conditions, they do not vary historically; but they do vary *with* history. What in fact they present is the way in which the problem appears in a particular historical formation: what can I know or see and articulate in such and such a condition for light and language? What can I do, what power can I

claim and what resistances may I counter? What can I be, with what folds can I surround myself or how can I produce myself as a subject? On these three questions, the "I" does not designate a universal but a set of particular positions occupied within a One speaks–One sees, One confronts, One lives.[44] No single solution can be transposed from one age to another, but we can penetrate or encroach on certain problematic fields, which means that the "givens" of an old problem are reactivated in another. (Perhaps there still is a Greek somewhere in Foucault, revealed by a certain faith which he places in a "problematization" of pleasures.)

Finally, it is praxis that constitutes the sole continuity between past and present, or, conversely, the way in which the present explains the past. *If Foucault's interviews form an integral part of his work,* it is because they extend the historical problematization of each of his books into the construction of the present problem, be it madness, punishment, or sexuality. What are the new types of struggle, which are transversal and immediate rather than centralized and mediatized? What are the "intellectual's" new functions, which are specific or "particular" rather than universal? What are the new modes of subjectivation, which tend to have no identity? This is the present triple root of the questions: *What can I do, What do I know, What am I?*

The events which led up to 1968 were like the "rehearsal" of these three questions.[45] What is our light and what is our language, that is to say, our "truth" today? What powers must we confront, and what is our capacity for resistance, today when we can no longer be content to say that the old struggles are no longer worth anything? And do we not perhaps above all bear witness to and even participate in the "production of a new subjectivity"? Do not the changes in capitalism find an unexpected "encounter" in the slow emergence of a new Self as a center of resistance? Each time there is social change, is there not a movement of subjective reconversion, with its ambiguities but also its potential? These questions may be considered more important than a reference to man's universal rights, including in the realm of pure law. In Foucault, everything is subject to variables and variation: the variables of knowledge (for example, objects and subjects as immanent variables of the statement) and the variation in the relation between forms; the variable particularities of power and the

variations in the relations between forces; the variable subjectivities, and the variation of the fold or of subjectivation.

But if it is true that the conditions are no more general or constant than the conditioned element, it is none the less the conditions that interest Foucault. This is why he calls his work historical research and not the work of a historian. He does not write a history of mentalities but of the conditions governing everything that has a mental existence, namely statements and the system of language. He does not write a history of behavior but of the conditions governing everything that has a visible existence, namely a system of light. He does not write a history of institutions but of the conditions governing their integration of different relations between forces, at the limits of a social field. He does not write a history of private life but of the conditions governing the way in which the relation to oneself constitutes a private life. He does not write a history of subjects but of processes of subjectivation, governed by the foldings operating in the ontological as much as the social field.[46] In truth, one thing haunts Foucault — thought. The question: "What does thinking signify? What do we call thinking?" is the arrow first fired by Heidegger and then again by Foucault. He writes a history, but a history of thought as such. To think means to experiment and to problematize. Knowledge, power and the self are the triple root of a problematization of thought. In the field of knowledge as problem thinking is first of all seeing and speaking, but thinking is carried out in the space between the two, in the interstice or disjunction between seeing and speaking. On each occasion it invents the interlocking, firing an arrow from the one towards the target of the other, creating a flash of light in the midst of words, or unleashing a cry in the midst of visible things. Thinking makes both seeing and speaking attain their individual limits, such that the two are the common limit that both separates and links them.

On top of this, in the field of power as problem, thinking involves the transmission of particular features: it is a dice-throw. What the dice-throw represents is that thinking always comes from the outside (that outside which was already engulfed in the interstice or which constituted the common limit). Thinking is neither innate nor acquired. It is not the innate exercise of a faculty, but neither is it a

learning process constituted in the external world. Artaud contrasted the innate and the acquired with the "genital," the genitality of thought as such, a thought which comes from an outside that is farther away than any external world, and hence closer than any internal world. Must this outside be called Chance?[47] The dice-throw does in fact express the simplest possible power-or-force-relation, the one established between particular features arrived at by chance (the numbers on the different faces).

The relations between forces, as Foucault understands them, concern not only men but the elements, the letters of the alphabet, which group either at random or according to certain laws of attraction and frequency dictated by a particular language. Chance works only in the first case; while the second case perhaps operates under conditions that are partially determined by the first, as in a Markov chain, where we have a succession of partial relinkings. This is the outside: the line that continues to link up random events in a mixture of chance and dependency. Consequently, thinking here takes on new figures: drawing out particular features; linking events; and on each occasion inventing the series that move from the neighborhood of one particular feature to the next. There are all sorts of particular features which have all come from outside: particular features of power, caught up in the relations between forces; features of resistance, which pave the way for change; and even *savage* features which remain suspended outside, without entering into relations or allowing themselves to be integrated (only here does "savage" take on a meaning, not as an experience but as that which cannot yet be absorbed into experience).[48]

All these determinations of thought are already original figures of the action of thought. And for a long time Foucault did not believe that thought could be anything else. How could thought invent a morality, since thought can find nothing in itself except that outside from which it comes and which resides in it as "the unthought"? That *Fiat*! which destroys any imperative in advance.[49] However, Foucault speeds up the emergence of one strange final figure: if the outside, farther away than any external world, is also closer than any internal world, is this not a sign that thought affects itself, by revealing the outside to be its own unthought element?

It cannot discover the unthought . . . without immediately bringing the unthought nearer to itself — or even, perhaps, without pushing it further away, and in any case without causing man's own being to undergo a change by that very fact, since it is deployed in the distance between them.[50]

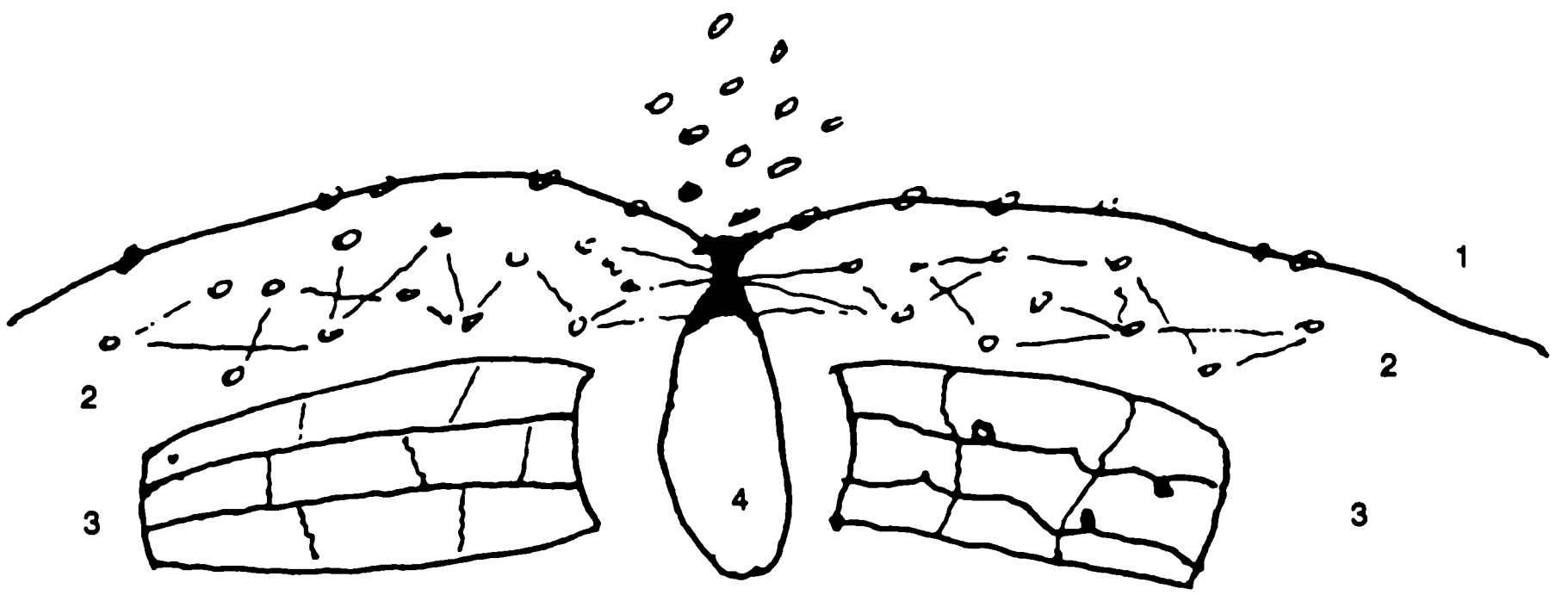
This auto-affection, this conversion of far and near, will assume more and more importance by constructing an *inside-space* that will be completely copresent with the outside-space on the line of the fold. The problematical unthought gives way to a thinking being who problematizes himself, as an ethical subject (in Artaud this is the "innate genital"; in Foucault it is the meeting between self and sexuality). To think is to fold, to double the outside with a coextensive inside. The general topology of thought, which had already begun "in the neighborhood" of the particular features, now ends up in the folding of the outside into the inside: "in the interior of the exterior and inversely," as *Madness and Civilization* put it. We have shown how any organization (differentiation and integration) presupposed the primary topological structure of an absolute outside and inside that encourages relative intermediary exteriorities and interiorities: every inside-space is topologically in contact with the outside-space, independent of distance and on the limits of a "living"; and this carnal or vital topology, far from showing up in space, frees a sense of time that fits the past into the inside, brings about the future in the outside, and brings the two into confrontation at the limit of the living present.[51]

Foucault is not only an archivist in the manner of Gogol, or a cartographer in the manner of Chekhov, but a topologist in the manner of Bely in his great novel *Petersburg*, which uses this cortical folding in order to convert outside and inside: in a second space the industry of the town and of the brain are merely the obverse of one another. It is in this way — which no longer owes anything to Heidegger — that Foucault understands the doubling or the fold. If the inside is constituted by the folding of the outside, between them there is a topological relation: the relation to oneself is homologous to the relation with the outside and the two are in contact, through the intermediary of the strata which are relatively external environments (and therefore relatively internal).

On the limit of the strata, the whole of the inside finds itself actively present on the outside. The inside condenses the past (a long period

of time) in ways that are not at all continuous but instead confront it with a future that comes from outside, exchange it and re-create it. To think means to be embedded in the present-time stratum that serves as a limit: what can I see and what can I say today? But this involves thinking of the past as it is condensed in the inside, in the relation to oneself (there is a Greek in me, or a Christian, and so on). We will then think the past against the present and resist the latter, not in favour of a return but "in favor, I hope, of a time to come" (Nietzsche), that is, by making the past active and present to the outside so that something new will finally come about, so that thinking, always, may reach thought. Thought thinks its own history (the past), but in order to free itself from what it thinks (the present) and be able finally to "think otherwise" (the future).[52]

This is what Blanchot called "the passion of the outside," a force that tends towards the outside only because the outside itself has become "intimacy," "intrusion."[53] The three agencies of topology are at once relatively independent and constantly replacing one another. The strata have the task of continually producing levels that force something new to be seen or said. But equally the relation to the outside has the task of reassessing the forces established, while, last of all, the relation to oneself has the task of calling up and producing new modes of subjectivation. Foucault's work links up again with the great works that for us have changed what it means to think.



1. Line of the outside
2. Strategic zone
3. Strata
4. Fold (zone of subjectivation)

"I have never written anything but fictions . . ." But never has fiction produced such truth and reality. How could we narrate Foucault's great fiction? The world is made up of superimposed surfaces, archives or strata. The world is thus knowledge. But strata are crossed by a central fissure that separates on the one hand the visual scenes, and on the other the sound curves: the articulable and the visible on each stratum, the two irreducible forms of knowledge, Light and Language, two vast environments of exteriority where visibilities and statements are respectively deposited. So we are caught in a double movement. We immerse ourselves from stratum to stratum, from band to band; we cross the surfaces, scenes and curves; we follow the fissure, in order to reach an interior of the world: as Melville says, we look for a central chamber, afraid that there will be no one there and that man's soul will reveal nothing but an immense and terrifying void (who would think of looking for life among the archives?). But at the same time we try to climb above the strata in order to reach an outside, an atmospheric element, a "nonstratified substance" that would be capable of explaining how the two forms of knowledge can embrace and intertwine on each stratum, from one edge of the fissure to the other. If not, then how could the two halves of the archive communicate, how could statements explain scenes, or scenes illustrate statements?

The informal outside is a battle, a turbulent, stormy zone where particular points and the relations of forces between these points are tossed about. Strata merely collected and solidified the visual dust and the sonic echo of the battle raging above them. But, up above, the particular features have no form and are neither bodies nor speaking persons. We enter into the domain of uncertain doubles and partial deaths, where things continually emerge and fade (Bichat's zone). This is a micropolitics. Here, says Faulkner, we no longer act like people but like two moths or feathers, deaf and blind to one another, "in the midst of the furious and slowly dispersing clouds of dust that we fling at each other shouting Death to the bastards! Kill! Kill!" Each atmospheric state in this zone corresponds to a diagram of forces or particular features which are taken up by relations: a strategy. If strata are of the earth, then a strategy belongs to the air or the ocean. But it is the strategy's job to be fulfilled in the stratum, just as it is the diagram's job to come to fruition in the archive, and

the nonstratified substance's job to become stratified. To be realized in this way means becoming both integrated and different. The informal relations between forces differentiate from one another by creating two heterogeneous forms, that of the curves which pass through the neighborhood of particular features (statements) and that of the scenes which distribute them into figures of light (visibilities). And at the same time the relations between forces become integrated, precisely in the formal relations between the two, from one side to the other of differentiation. This is because the relations between forces ignored the fissure within the strata, which begins only below them. They are apt to hollow out the fissure by being actualized in the strata, but also to hop over it in both senses of the term by becoming differentiated even as they become integrated.

Forces always come from the outside, from an outside that is farther away than any form of exteriority. So there are not only particular features taken up by the relations between forces, but particular features of resistance that are apt to modify and overturn these relations and to change the unstable diagram. And there are even savage particular features, not yet linked up, on the line of the outside itself, which form a teeming mass especially just above the fissure. This is a terrible line that shuffles all the diagrams, above the very raging storms. It is like Melville's line, whose two ends remain free, which envelops every boat in its complex twists and turns, goes into horrible contortions when that moment comes, and always runs the risk of sweeping someone away with it; or like Michaux's line "of a thousand aberrations" with its growing molecular speed, which is the "whiplash of a furious charioteer." But however terrible this line may be, it is a line of life that can no longer be gauged by relations between forces, one that carries man beyond terror. For at the place of the fissure the line forms a Law, the "center of the cyclone, where one can live and in fact where Life exists par excellence." It is as if the accelerated speeds, which last only briefly, constituted "a slow Being" over a longer period of time. It is like a pineal gland, constantly reconstituting itself by changing direction, tracing an inside space but coextensive with the whole line of the outside. The most distant point becomes interior, by being converted into the nearest: *life within the folds*. This is the central chamber, which one need no longer fear is empty since one fills it with oneself. Here one becomes

a master of one's speed and, relatively speaking, a master of one's molecules and particular features, in this zone of subjectivation: the boat as interior of the exterior.

Notes

Abbreviations

AK *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* trans. A. Sheridan (London: Tavistock and New York: Pantheon, 1972).

AS *L'archéologie du savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969).

BC *The Birth of the Clinic,* trans. A. Sheridan (London: Tavistock and New York: Pantheon, 1973).

CNP *Ceci n'est pas une pipe* (Montpellier: Fata Morgana, 1973).

DL *Death and the Labyrinth: the World of Raymond Roussel,* trans. C. Ruas (New York: Doubleday, 1986 and London: Athlone, 1987).

DP *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison,* trans. A. Sheridan (London: Allen Lane and New York: Pantheon, 1977; reprinted Harmondsworth: Peregrine, 1979).

HF *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972).

HS *The History of Sexuality, vol. 1: An Introduction,* trans. R. Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1978 and Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984).

IPR *I, Pierre Rivière* . . . trans. F. Jellinek (New York: Pantheon, 1975 and Harmondsworth: Peregrine 1978).

LCP *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice,* edited by D. Bouchard (Oxford: Blackwell, 1977).

LIM "The life of infamous men," in *Power, Truth, Strategy,* edited by M. Morris and P. Patton (Sydney: Feral Publications, 1979) pp. 76–91.

MAC *Madness and Civilization,* trans. R. Howard (New York: Random House, 1965 and London: Tavistock, 1967).

MC *Les mots et les choses* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966).

MPR *Moi, Pierre Rivière* . . . (Paris: Gallimard-Julliard, ouvrage collectif, 1973).

NC *Naissance de la clinique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1963; revised 1972).

NGH 'Nietzsche, la généalogie, l'histoire', in *Hommage à Jean Hyppolite* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971). 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History', trans. D. Bouchard and S. Simon, in *LCP,* pp. 139–164.

OD *L'ordre du discours* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971).

OT *The Order of Things,* trans. A. Sheridan (London: Tavistock and New York: Pantheon, 1970).

PDD 'La pensée du dehors', *Critique,* No. 229 (June 1966): 523–546.

QA 'Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?', *Bulletin de la Société française de philosophie,* 63, No. 3 (1969), 73–104.

RR *Raymond Roussel* (Paris: Gallimard, 1963).

SP *Surveiller et punir. Naissance de la prison* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975).

SS *Le souci de soi* (Histoire de la sexualité III) (Paris: Gallimard, 1984).

TDL "The Discourse on Language," trans. R. Swyer, in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York, 1972).

TNP *This is not a pipe,* trans. James Harkness (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

TUP *The Use of Pleasure,* trans. R. Hurley (New York: Random House, 1985 and Harmondsworth: Viking, 1986).

UP *L'usage des plaisirs* (Histoire de la sexualité II) (Paris: Gallimard, 1984).

VHI 'La vie des hommes infâmes', *Les cahiers du chemin* 29 (1977), pp. 12–29.

VS *La volonté de savoir* (Histoire de la sexualité I) (Paris: Gallimard, 1976).

WA 'What is an Author', trans. D. Bouchard and S. Simon, in *LCP,* pp. 113–138.

1. *VHI,* p. 16 [*LIM,* p. 80].

2. *NC,* pp. 142–148, 155–156 [*BC,* pp. 140–146, 152–153].

3. *VHI,* p. 16 [*LIM,* p. 80]. We note that Foucault differs from two other views of infamy. The first, akin to Bataille's position, deals with lives which pass into legend or narrative by virtue of their very excess (for example the classic infamy of a Gilles de Rais, which through being "notorious" is consequently false). In the other view, which is closer to Borges, life passes into legend because its complex procedures, detours, and discontinuities can be given intelligibility only by a narrative capable of exhausting all possible eventualities, including contradictory ones (for example, the "baroque" infamy of a Stavisky). But Foucault conceives of a third infamy, which is properly speaking an infamy of rareness, that of insignificant, obscure, simple men, who are spotlighted only for a moment by police reports or complaints. This is a conception that comes close to Chekhov.

4. *UP,* p. 14 [*TUP,* p. 8].

5. See *MC,* pp. 333–339 [*OT,* pp. 327–8] for "the *Cogito* and the unthought." See also *PDD.*

6. *MC,* pp. 263, 324, 328, 335 [*OT,* pp. 251, 313, 317, 324].

7. *NC,* pp. 132–133, 138, 164 [*BC,* pp. 131–136, 161].

8. *HF*, p. 22 [*MAC*, p. 11].

9. M. Blanchot, *L'Entretien infini* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), p. 292.

10. *MC*, p. 350 [*OT*, p. 339] (and on Kantian man as being an "empirico-transcendental doublet," an "empirico-critical doubling").

11. [*Translator's note:* As well as meaning "double," "doubling," etc., *La Doublure* (Paris: Lemerre, 1897) is also the title of a novel written in Alexandrines by Roussel]. These are the constant themes of *RR*, especially chapter 2, where all the meanings of *doublure* are recapitulated in a discussion of Roussel's *Chiquenaude:* "les vers de la doublure dans la pièce de Forban talon rouge" (*RR*, p. 37) ("the verses of the understudy in the play of Red Claw the Pirate" [*DL*, p. 25]). [This gradually becomes "les vers de la doublure dans la pièce du fort pantalon rouge" (*RR*, p. 38) ("the mole holes in the lining of the material of the strong red pants" [*DL*, p. 26])].

12. We must quote the whole text on Roussel and Leiris, because we feel it involves something that concerns Foucault's whole life: "From so many things without any social standing, from so many fantastic civic records, [Leiris] slowly accumulates his own identity, as if within the folds of words there slept, with nightmares never completely extinguished, an absolute memory. These same folds Roussel parts with a studied gesture to find the stifling hollowness, the inexorable absence of being, which he disposes of imperiously to create forms without parentage or species" (*DL*, p. 19).

13. *UP*, p. 88 [*TUP*, p. 76].

14. See *UP*, p. 90 [*TUP*, p. 77] for the two aspects of "differentiation" after the classical era.

15. *UP*, pp. 93–94 [*TUP*, pp. 80–81].

16. This accounts for a certain tone in Foucault, which distances him from Heidegger (no, the Greeks are not "famous": see the interview with Barbedette and Scala in *Les Nouvelles*, 28 June 1984).

17. Foucault does not directly analyze the diagram of forces or power relations unique to the Greeks. But he does appreciate what has been done in this area by contemporary historians such as Detienne, Vernant, and Vidal-Naquet. Their originality lies precisely in the fact that they defined the Greek physical and mental space in terms of the new type of power relations. From this point of view, it is important to show that the "agonistic" relation to which Foucault constantly alludes is an original function (which shows up especially in the behavior of lovers).

18. On the constitution of a subject, or "subjectivation," as something irreducible to the code, see *UP*, pp. 33–37 [*TUP*, pp. 25–30]; on the sphere of aesthetic

existence, see *UP*, pp. 103–105 [*TUP*, pp. 89–91]. "Facultative rules" is a phrase taken not from Foucault but from Labov which none the less seems perfectly adequate on the level of a statement, to designate functions of internal variation that are no longer constants. Here it acquires a more general meaning, to designate regulating functions as opposed to codes.

19. *UP*, p. 73 [*TUP*, p. 62].

20. Foucault says that he had begun by writing a book on sexuality (the sequel to *HS*, in the same series); "then I wrote a book on the notion of self and the techniques of self in which sexuality had disappeared, and I was obliged to rewrite for the third time a book in which I tried to maintain a balance between the two." See Dreyfus and Rabinow, p. 226.

21. *UP*, pp. 61–62 [*TUP*, pp. 50–52].

22. *UP*, pp. 55–57 [*TUP*, pp. 46–47].

23. See *TUP*, parts 2, 3 and 4. On the "antinomy of the boy," see *UP*, p. 243 [*TUP*, p. 221].

24. See Dreyfus and Rabinow, pp. 211–213. We can resume Foucault's different pieces of information as follows: (a) morality has two poles, the code and the mode of subjectivation, but they are in inverse proportion to one another, and the intensification of one involves the diminution of the other (*UP*, pp. 35–37 [*TUP*, pp. 28–30]); (b) subjectivation tends to pass into a code, and becomes empty or rigid to the profit of the code (this is a general theme of *SS*); (c) a new type of power appears, which assumes the task of individualizing and penetrating the interior: this is first of all the pastoral power of the Church, which is then taken over by the power of the State (see Dreyfus and Rabinow, pp. 214–215: this text by Foucault links up with *DP*'s analysis of 'individualizing and modulating power').

25. *UP*, p. 37 [*TUP*, p. 30].

26. I am systematizing the four aspects outlined by Foucault in *UP*, pp. 32–39 [*TUP*, pp. 25–32]. Foucault uses the word "subjection" to designate the second aspect of the subject's constitution; but this word then takes on a meaning different to the one it has when the constituted subject is subjected to power-relations. The third aspect has a particular importance and allows us to return to *OT*, which in fact showed how life, labor and language were first and foremost an object of knowledge, before being folded to constitute a more profound subjectivity.

27. See the chapter on Plato, part 5 of *TUP*.

28. *HS* had already shown that the body and its pleasures, that is to say a "sexuality without sex," was the modern means of "resisting" the agency of "Sex,"

which knits desire to law (*VS*, p. 208 [*HS*, p. 157]). But as a return to the Greeks this is extremely partial and ambiguous; for the body and its pleasures in the Greek view was related to the agonistic relations between free men, and hence to a "virile society" that was unisexual and excluded women; while we are obviously looking here for a different type of relations that is unique to our own social field.

29. See Dreyfus and Rabinow, pp. 211–212.

30. Foucault never considered himself sufficiently competent to treat the subject of Oriental forms of development. He occasionally alludes to the Chinese "ars erotica" as being different either from our "scientia sexualis" (*HS*) or from the aesthetic life of the Greeks (*TUP*). The question would be: is there a Self or a process of subjectivation in Oriental techniques?

31. On the problem of long and short durations in history and their relation to the series, see F. Braudel, *Ecrits sur l'histoire* (Paris: Flammarion, 1977 [*On History*, trans. S. Matthews, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982]. In *AS*, pp. 15–16 [*AK*, pp. 7–8] Foucault showed how epistemological periods of time were necessarily short.

32. See *SS*, pp. 75–84.

33. This is one of Heidegger's main themes in his interpretation of Kant. On Foucault's late declarations in which he links himself to Heidegger, see *Les Nouvelles*, 28 June 1984.

34. It was the themes of the Outside and of exteriority which at first seemed to impose a primacy of space over time, as is borne out by *MC*, p. 351 [*OT*, p. 340].

35. *RR*, pp. 136–140 [*DL*, pp. 105–108].

36. On the Fold, the interlocking or the chiasmus, the "turning back on itself of the visible," see M. Merleau-Ponty, *Le visible et l'invisible* (Paris: Gallimard, 1979, 1964 [*The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. A. Lingis, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969]). And the "work-notes" insist on the necessity of surpassing intentionality on the way with a vertical dimension that constitutes a topology (pp. 263–264). In Merleau-Ponty, this topology implies the discovery that "flesh" is the place of such an act of return (which we already find in Heidegger, according to Didier Franck, *Heidegger et le problème de l'espace* [Paris: Minuit, 1986]). This is why we may believe that the analysis conducted by Foucault in the unpublished *Les aveux de la chair* in turn concerns the whole of the problem of the "fold" (incarnation) when it stresses the Christian origins of flesh from the viewpoint of the history of sexuality.

37. The text of *RR*, pp. 136 and 140 [*DL*, pp. 105–106; 108] insists on this point, when the gate passes through the lens set in the pen-holder: "An interior celebration of being [. . .] a visibility separate from being seen [although] access to

it is through a glass lens or a vignette [. . .] it's [. . .] to place the act of seeing in parenthesis [. . .] a plethora of beings serenely impose themselves."

38. According to Heidegger, the *Lichtung* is the Open not only for light and the visible, but also for the voice and sound. We find the same point in Merleau-Ponty, *op. cit.*, pp. 201–202. Foucault denies the set of these links.

39. For example, there is no single "object" that would be madness, towards which a "consciousness" would direct itself. But madness is seen in several different ways and articulated in still other ways, depending on the period in time and even on the different stages of a period. We do not see the same madmen, nor speak of the same illnesses. See *AS*, pp. 45–46 [*AK*, pp. 31–32].

40. It is in Brisset that Foucault finds the greatest development of the battle: "He undertakes to restore words to the noises that gave birth to words, and to reanimate the gestures, assaults, and violences of which words stand as the now silent blazon" (*GL*, xv).

41. "My whole philosophical evolution has been determined by my reading of Heidegger. But I recognize that it is Nietzsche who brought me to him" (*Les Nouvelles*, p. 40).

42. What is interesting about E. Renan is the way the *Prière sur l'Acropole* presents the "Greek miracle" as being essentially linked to a memory, and memory linked in turn to a no less fundamental forgetting within a temporal structure of boredom (turning away). Zeus himself is defined by the turning back [*le repli*], giving birth to Wisdom "having turned in on himself [*replié*], having breathed deeply."

43. See the French edition of Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault, un parcours philosophique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), p. 332.

44. On Foucault's three "problems," which obviously must be contrasted with Kant's three questions, see *UP*, pp. 12–19 [*TUP*, pp. 6–13]. See also Dreyfus and Rabinow, p. 216, where Foucault admires Kant for having asked not only if there is a universal subject, but also the question: "What are we? in a precise moment of history."

45. To read some analyses, you would think that 1968 took place in the heads of a few Parisian intellectuals. We must therefore remember that it is the product of a long chain of world events, and of a series of currents of international thought, that already linked *the emergence of new forms of struggle to the production of a new subjectivity*, if only in its critique of centralism and its qualitative claims concerning the "quality of life." On the level of world events we can briefly quote the experiment with self-management in Yugoslavia, the Czech Spring and its subsequent repression, the Vietnam War, the Algerian War and the question of networks, but we can also point to the signs of a "new class" (the new working class), the emergence of farmers' or students' unions, the so-called institutional

psychiatric and educational centers, and so on. On the level of currents of thought we must no doubt go back to Lukács, whose *History and Class Consciousness* was already raising questions to do with a new subjectivity; then the Frankfurt school, Italian Marxism, and the first signs of "autonomy" (Tronti); the reflection that revolved around Sartre on the question of the new working class (Gorz); the groups such as "Socialism or Barbarism," "Situationism," "the Communist Way" (especially Félix Guattari and the "micropolitics of desire"). Certain currents and events have continued to make their influence felt. After 1968, Foucault personally rediscovers the question of new forms of struggle, with GIP (Group for Information about Prisons) and the struggle for prison rights, and elaborates the "microphysics of power" in *DP*. He is then led to think through and live out the role of the intellectual in a very new way. Then he turns to the question of a new subjectivity, whose givens are transformed between *HS* and *TUP*, which this time is perhaps linked to American movements. On the link between the different struggles, the intellectual and subjectivity, see Foucault's analyses in Dreyfus and Rabinow, pp. 211–212. Foucault's interest in new forms of subjectivity was also surely essential.

46. See *UP*, p. 15 [*TUP*, p. 9]. The most profound study on Foucault, history and conditions, is by Paul Veyne, "Foucault revolutionizes history," in *Comment on écrit l'histoire* (Paris: Seuil, 1971), especially on the question of "invariants."

47. The trinity of Nietzsche, Mallarmé and Artaud is invoked above all at the end of *OT*.

48. See *OD*, p. 37, where Foucault invokes a "savage exteriority" and offers the example of Mendel, who dreamed up biological objects, concepts, and methods that could not be assimilated by the biology of his day. This does not at all contradict the idea that there is no savage experience. It does not exist, because any experience already supposes knowledge and power-relations. Therefore for this very reason savage particular features find themselves pushed out of knowledge and power into the "margins," so much so that science cannot recognize them. See *OD*, pp. 35–37.

49. Husserl himself invoked in thought a "fiat" like the throw of dice or the positions of a point in his *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie* (1913).

50. *MC*, p. 338 [*OT*, p. 327]. See also the commentary on Husserl's phenomenology, *MC*, p. 336 [*OT*, p. 325].

51. See G. Simonden, *L'individu et sa genèse physico-biologique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1964), pp. 258–265.

52. See *UP*, p. 15 [*TUP*, p. 9].

53. M. Blanchot, *L'entretien infini*, pp. 64–66.

14

Foucault and Feminism: A Critical Reappraisal

Jana Sawicki

Feminist appropriations of Foucault have resulted in pathbreaking and provocative social and cultural criticism. Original analyses of anorexia nervosa, the social construction of femininity, female sexual desire, sexual liberation, the politics of needs and the politics of differences have changed the landscape of feminist theory.[1] Why has Foucault's poststructuralist discourse been of special interest to feminists? Foucault's attention to the productive nature of power, and his emphasis on the body as a target and vehicle of modern disciplinary practices were compatible with already developing feminist insights about the politics of personal life, the ambiguous nature of the so-called "sexual revolution" in the sixties, the power of internalized oppression, and the seeming intractability of gender as a key to personal identity. In addition, Foucault was one of the most politically engaged of the poststructuralists. He did not confine his political interventions to the experiments in playing with language characteristic of the literary avant-garde. His books were intended to serve as interventions in contemporary practices that govern the lives of oppressed groups such as homosexuals, mental patients, and prisoners. Moreover, his skeptical attitude toward Enlightenment humanism, universalist histories, and traditional emancipatory theories coincided with feminist critiques of the limits of liberalism and Marxism.[2]

Recently, however, some feminists have put the feminist collaboration with Foucault into question. They argue that feminist appropriations of Foucault's discourses on subjectivity, power, and resistance threaten to undermine the emancipatory project of fem-

inism. In a provocative essay Linda Alcoff claims that Foucault's description of Enlightenment humanism and the constitution of the modern subject as key dimensions of the rise of disciplinary forms of "subjection" deprive feminism of any effective agency or sense of authority.[3] His politics of self-refusal allegedly leaves feminism with no standpoint from which to engage in an emancipatory politics and nothing to strive for. Alcoff also criticizes Foucault for appealing to micropolitics without providing any analysis of the overall structures of domination. Thus, she argues, he provides neither a theory of resistance nor a basis for judging between subjugated forms of experience that are truly resistant to hegemonic power relations and those which are not. According to Alcoff, Foucault leaves feminism with no normative or theoretical basis for making political judgments.[4]

In a similar vein, both Barbara Christian and Nancy Hartsock raise suspicions about Foucault's poststructuralist critiques of subjectivity and humanism.[5] They argue that its influence and prevalence overshadows the efforts of third-world and minority cultures to establish their own identities and literatures as oppositional to the hegemonic forces of patriarchal and imperialist capitalism. In general, these critiques portray poststructuralist discourses as too relativistic, nihilistic, and pessimistic to serve as a basis for an adequate feminist politics.

My initial reaction to such criticisms in the past has been to defend Foucault, for I think they either beg important questions about humanism and liberatory politics raised by Foucault's discourses, or misunderstand the nature of his project. After all, an ironic tension permeated Foucault's discourse. He refused the role of visionary, but introduced his genealogies of modern power/knowledge in order to free up the possibilities for new forms of life. He undermined Enlightenment humanism in order to prepare the way for new forms of experience. He was a pessimist committed to political activism. That he has been labelled structural determinist and voluntarist, activist and fatalist, leftist and neoconservative suggests either that his own discourse was incoherent and confused or that his interpreters have been unwilling to suspend traditional assumptions and categories when judging it.

I think both alternatives are partially correct. On the one hand, Foucault was famous for shifting direction and abandoning the project of developing ideas laid out in earlier books. Many diverse interpretations of Foucault's "position" can and have been defended with reference to his texts and interviews. His later work on the ethics of the self could be read as an effort to reengage in a dialogue with humanism. On the other hand, many of these interpretations beg the questions that Foucault raises. Are there not good historical reasons to be suspicious of universalist history, or the search for anthropological foundations and master schemes for social transformation? Doesn't the rise of new social movements in the United States and Western Europe put into question the binary models that privilege the struggles between proletarian and bourgeois capitalist, or men and women, as primary within an emancipatory politics? Haven't the interiorization of humanity and processes of individualization (for instance, the creation of the homosexual, hysteric, or criminal personality) been linked to pernicious forms of social control? Is there not good reason to be wary of the constitution of theoretical unities such as "women's experience," "lesbian experience," and "the third world" insofar as they inevitably suppress important differences?

There may also be good reasons for continuing to operate with many of the categories and assumptions of traditional revolutionary theory. Nevertheless, Foucault has opened the question from a perspective that is sympathetic with demands for radical change. He does so by writing histories that focus our attention on how traditional emancipatory theories and strategies have been blind to their own dominating tendencies. He suggests that they are historically linked to disciplinary practices that have been more oppressive than liberating.

While I clearly believe there is much of value for feminism in Foucault and that the answer to many of the questions posed above is yes, any feminist appropriation of the "male-stream" tradition must be critical. In my own work, I have reconstructed a version of Foucault that I find useful for addressing issues in American feminist theory and practice. Sometimes this has meant emphasizing aspects of his discourse that he did not develop sufficiently, and de-emphasizing others. For instance, I have continually stressed and attempted to develop his remarks about resistance and struggle found in later

interviews and in *The History of Sexuality* and de-emphasized or dismissed the totalistic rhetoric of decline found in *Discipline and Punish.* Moreover, as Foucault himself urged, one must look for the effects of power produced by all discursive practices, including his own. So, there are indeed limits to the feminist collaboration with Foucault. Some of these limits are due to the limited nature of Foucault's project itself. Others are the consequence of his androcentrism. In what follows, I shall address both.

Foucault's Critical Project

Much criticism of Foucault stems from a lack of clarity about the nature of his project. His own remarks about the trajectory of his work often contributed to this lack of clarity. Was he actually developing a "theory" of power, or of resistance at all? Foucault was less a political theorist than a historian engaged in metatheoretical critique. Nevertheless, his critique of humanism and disciplinary power did imply that traditional categories and assumptions informing modern practices, particularly therapeutic and other liberatory practices rooted in certain understandings of identity, are dangerous. His genealogy of modern power/knowledge did challenge political orientations that presuppose that power is primarily repressive. His emphasis on power relations at the microlevel of society did suggest that state-centered and economistic political strategies do not capture power where it is most effective. And insofar as the micropractices of power that he described constitute a shared background of habits and dispositions that are rarely questioned and in fact not really chosen in any conscious sense, he implied that much of history is beyond our control. For Foucault, the heritage of cultural and political traditions and the range of choices we have for defining ourselves and our political perspectives are themselves not chosen. Genealogy was his method for investigating the historical origins of some of this heritage and for resisting it insofar as it is linked with domination.

One could argue that it is politically irresponsible to radically question existing theoretical and political options without taking any responsibility for the impact that such critique will have and without offering any alternative. Insofar as Foucault identified impersonal forces and tendencies in history beyond the direct control of individ-

ual and collective agents, he did confront a dilemma. If much of history is beyond control, then what sense does it make to resist at all? Aren't his own "political" interventions left without any coherence or justification insofar as they seem to presuppose the very norms and values that he puts into question?

One strategy for slipping between the horns of this dilemma is to suggest that Foucault's contributions consist primarily of attempting to bring to our awareness the deep regularities and broad and impersonal forces that make us what we are, that define our sense of alternatives and what it makes sense to do in certain contexts in order to free us from them. In other words, while he may have denied that much of what informs our modern sensibility was not chosen, this does not mean that one cannot attempt to bring to light the anonymous historical processes through which this sensibility was constituted in an effort to create a critical distance on it. According to Foucault, our freedom consists in our ability to transform our relationship to tradition and not in being able to control the direction that the future will take.[6]

How does he justify his protests? There are two alternatives. He can deny that protest against oppression requires any neutral standpoint of justification at all. The fact is that people often *do* resist what they regard as oppressive circumstances. The specific categories and practices that Foucault identifies as particularly dangerous — modern processes of individualization and normalization found in the discourses and institutions of psychiatry, sociology, criminology and so forth — are those that he was motivated to resist based upon his own experiences. As a "homosexual author" Foucault was also a product of the disciplinary technologies that constituted modern notions of authority and sexual identity.[7] At the same time, he resisted them. One of his strategies of resistance was to describe the historical process through which sexual practices came to be identified as central to personality — for example, the process through which the homosexual identity was constituted. He believed that liberation struggles rooted in demands for a right to one's sexuality are limited insofar as they accept the fixing of sexual identity established by institutions interested in regulating and controlling it. He hoped to stimulate other avenues of resistance to the disciplinary technologies of sex in addition to those premised on embracing homosexuality as a natural

fact — to open up possibilities for other ways of experiencing ourselves as sexual subjects. Thus, he resisted the idea of a fixed sexual identity at the same time that he believed, of course, that homosexuals should have civil liberties as homosexuals. In any case, Foucault's own protest is testimony to the fact that he did not believe that the normalizing processes that he described were total.[8] It is also evidence that he did not entirely reject the notion of agency. The fact that one cannot guarantee the outcome of such resistance is no argument against it. It is, instead, a reason to continue to be attentive to the limits of one's own discourses and practices.

In the absence of alternatives to present principles and values governing political struggle, we must continue to appeal to the standards of rationality and justice that are available to us within the specific contexts in which we find ourselves. These standards do not unilaterally determine one choice rather than another — how they are to be interpreted is itself a matter of struggle — but they do constitute a ground for critique and for justification. In other words, appeals to rights, liberties, and justice (and struggles over how to interpret these principles) are not denied to us. These are the only sorts of appeals that make sense to us right now.[9]

Foucault did not often adopt the latter alternative. But neither does his discourse deny us this option.[10] His genealogies of modern power/knowledge were not designed to show that Enlightenment forms of rationality were inherently linked to practices of domination, only that some of them were historically linked. Thus, he leaves open the possibility of disarticulating Enlightenment ideals from such practices.[11]

Nevertheless, he preferred to operate at a different level — the metatheoretical level of the genealogist. He wrote histories that brought to light the dangers but also the contingent character of Enlightenment principles and categories. Thus, genealogy is both a justificatory and an emancipatory strategy. On the one hand, the stories that he tells are designed to justify his claims that certain practices are more enslaving than liberating. On the other hand, his genealogies are "histories of the present." In other words, Foucault wrote from the perspective of a future historian in order to defamiliarize present practices and categories, to make them seem less self-evident and necessary. He attempted to free a space for the invention

of new forms of rationality and experience. But this does not necessarily invalidate the efforts of those who continue to struggle within the constraints of the old ones.[12]

As one commentator has aptly characterized it, "freedom" in Foucault's politics consisted of "a constant attempt at self-disengagement and self-invention."[13] We are free in being able to question and reevaluate our inherited identities and values, and to challenge received interpretations of them.

As feminists, I believe that we have good reason to appeal to Foucault's negative freedom, that is, the freedom to disengage from our political identities, our presumptions about gender differences, and the categories and practices that define feminism. We must cultivate this freedom because feminism has developed in the context of oppression. Women are produced by patriarchal power at the same time that they resist it. There are good reasons to be ambivalent about the liberatory possibilities of appealing to "reason," "motherhood," or the "feminine" when they have also been the source of our oppression. Even the recent history of feminism in the late twentieth century suggests that feminism has often been blind to the dominating tendencies of its own theories and to the broader social forces that undermine and redirect its agendas. Consequently, as I have argued elsewhere, genealogy is indispensable to feminism.[14]

I also believe that we need more than genealogical critique. Feminist practice must inevitably be negative and, I believe, skeptical. Yet, attempts to free ourselves from certain forms of experience and self-understanding inherited under conditions of domination and subordination are not enough. We must also continue to struggle for rights, justice, and liberties within the constraints of modernity.[15] We must also continue to envision alternative future possibilities. If there is indeed anything in Foucault's philosophy that prevents us from doing this, then we should reject it. As I have argued, I do not believe that there is.

Foucault's Androcentrism

Analyzing the power relations governing the production and dissemination of discourses was, of course, one of Foucault's principal projects. His preoccupation with thinking against oneself, his reluctance

to speak for others and to make political judgments were rooted in an aversion to authority and in his belief that intellectuals often overextend the limits of whatever authority they do possess. He suspected every position of maintaining itself by suppressing differences and uncertainties. Moreover, he was sensitive to the fact that oppositional discourses often unwittingly extend the very relations of domination that they are resisting. He would have been the first to endorse a genealogy of the genealogist.

In what follows I shall address some of the effects of male privilege and androcentrism in Foucault's discourse. There are tendencies and emphases there which must, at the very least, be regarded as "risky" for feminism. I borrow this term from Ann Ferguson.[16] Risky practices are those about which there is conflicting evidence concerning their practical and political implications. There are good reasons to adopt them and good reasons to doubt them. In other words, calling practices risky implies that although there is no hard and fast evidence that they lead to or perpetuate relations of domination, there is also sufficient reason to question them.

Risk taking has always been a part of feminism. In fact, one could argue that feminism is always at risk. Appealing to poststructuralist discourses seems especially risky since they do challenge us to suspend traditional assumptions about liberation and power, particularly the assumption that we must establish foundations for our own discourses, without offering any alternative political theory. As I have suggested above, Foucault thought that suspending traditional assumptions was crucial for bringing about new ways of thinking and new forms of life. To the extent that he developed a politics, it was a politics of uncertainty. I think he believed that one must always feel uncomfortable with one's political principles and strategies lest they become dogma. Accordingly, he valorized critique over vision and the destabilization of identity over its formation. It is to this aspect of his thought that I want to turn since it is here that I have my own doubts about the use of Foucault for feminism.

Foucault was notorious for his critique of modern humanism. And, as I have indicated, feminist critics of Foucault find in this critique a wholesale rejection of subjectivity and agency. But to focus on the ways in which the subject is in fact constituted, and on the broader social and political forces that determine the parameters and possi-

bilities of rational agency is not to deny agency. It does, however, point to its limits.

I understand Foucault's project itself as presupposing the existence of a critical subject, one capable of critical historical reflection, refusal, and invention. This subject does not control the overall direction of history, but it is able to choose among the discourses and practices available to it and to use them creatively.[17] It is also able to reflect upon the implications of its choices as they are taken up and transformed in a hierarchical network of power relations. Finally, this subject can suspend adherence to certain principles and assumptions, or to specific interpretations of them, in efforts to invent new ones. Foucault's subject is neither entirely autonomous nor enslaved, neither the originator of the discourses and practices that constitute its experiences nor determined by them.[18]

This account of subjectivity is compatible with the insights underpinning the feminist practice of consciousness-raising. On the one hand, consciousness raising assumes that our relationships to ourselves and to reality contain elements of domination that can lead to collaboration in our own oppression. On the other hand, it presupposes that the meaning of these experiences is not fixed, but rather subject to reinterpretation and collective critical analysis. In some models the aim of consciousness raising is not the development of a unified feminist consciousness but rather a critical consciousness and a recognition of oppression.[19] In her classic essay on feminist consciousness raising Sandra Bartky describes the process as one that leads to awareness of oppression, victimization, category confusion, and a sense of moral ambiguity.[20] Destabilization of identity is often the most profound effect of consciousness raising, not the creation of a unified sense of self.

Foucault's account of subjectivity does not introduce any obstacles to feminist praxis that were not already there. Feminist praxis is continually caught between appeals to a free subject and an awareness of victimization. Foucault suggests that this tension may be permanent, that both views are partially correct, and that living in this uncomfortable tension is an important catalyst for resistance and wariness.

But there are other dimensions of Foucault's discourses on subjectivity and resistance that are risky. As we have seen, he sometimes

endorsed practices of self-erasure and self-refusal. Ironically, he gained notoriety for efforts to disavow his own authority. In his last writings he spoke increasingly of the need to think against oneself, one's identities and attachments. Confessional practices aiming at self-disclosure and self-discovery were questioned insofar as they are linked with disciplinary technologies of domination. Indeed, Foucault was suspicious of most efforts to tell the truth about oneself, for they often involve relations of power in which as "confessing subject" one is subject to the judgment of an expert administering needs for the state.

Of course, any radical theorist in the twentieth century must take seriously the morally and politically suspect implications of the emergence of bourgeois preoccupations with the self — with individuality and self-discovery — in the West and with therapeutic techniques for engaging in such self-discovery. Foucault's own stories of the disciplinary subjection of the modern individual through practices of identity formation, confession, and self-improvement are convincing. Clearly, many aspects of feminine identity have been enslaving. Yet, Foucault's emphasis on the dangers of identity formation can all too easily become the basis for repudiating women's struggles to attain a sense of identity not defined by patriarchal interests. Indeed, one could argue that one of the conditions for the possibility of forming an oppositional women's movement is that women come to an awareness of themselves as *worth* fighting for.

Nancy Hartsock has asked: Why, at the point in history when feminist voices, authorities and identities are being established, do poststructuralist critiques of authority, identity, and personal narratives become fashionable? Even more forcefully, Caren Kaplan asks: "Who dares to let go of their respective representations and systems of meaning, their identity politics and theoretical homes when it is . . . a matter of life and death?"[21] This characterization of the implications of poststructuralist critiques like that of Foucault may not be entirely accurate, for it speaks more to the "assimilation" and domestication of poststructuralism in the American academy than it does to many of the "original" discourses themselves. As poststructuralism as been assimilated, it has often been stripped of its more radical impulses. Poststructuralism, and what Barbara Christian refers to as the "race for theory," do threaten to overshadow and supplant the political

literature and theories of women, people of color, third-world writers, and so forth.[22] After all, poststructuralist literary theory, for all of its potential, is an invention of disenchanted white males. It is not surprising that it should become more important than the subjugated discourses of the "other" about which it speaks.

While self-refusal may be an appropriate practice for a privileged white male intellectual such as Foucault, it is less obviously strategic for feminists and other disempowered groups. As women, many of us have been taught to efface ourselves as a matter of course. Someone has suggested that Anonymous was a woman. The absence of a sense of self, of one's value and authority, and of the legitimacy of one's needs and feelings is a hallmark of femininity as it has been defined in many patriarchal contexts. A principal aim of feminism has been to build women's self-esteem — the sense of confidence and identity necessary for developing an oppositional movement.[23]

Telling our stories to one another has been an important part of this process. It could even be argued that feminist psychotherapies that cultivate a certain self-preoccupation and self-assertion have helped women to avoid the tendency to lose themselves in others, particularly men. Even more important are the practices of truth telling associated with breaking through the silence of the many women who have suffered the trauma and violence of sexual and physical abuse. Such experiences can lead to forms of self-dispersal, detachment and dissociation which are so debilitating as to prevent an individual from participating in anything but "pathological" forms of protest such as eating disorders, multiple personality disorders, and the inability to form any intimate personal relationships at all. Feminist therapeutic practices designed to uncover this scandal and break the silence can indeed disrupt patriarchal power relations. Of course, as Adrienne Rich points out: "Breaking the silences, telling our tales, is not enough. We can value the process — and the courage it may require — without believing that it is an end in itself."[24] In order to be politically mobilized, this truth must be shared, collectively analyzed, and strategically deployed in feminist political struggle.

Thus, the strategic value for feminism of building identities, whether through literature or feminist therapeutic practices, will depend upon the contexts in which it is done. Whose identity? To what

end? Some women's voices are more authoritative than others. For example, my identity as a white feminist theorist in the academy may be more in need of destabilization than that of my black feminist counterpart. We must be prepared to ask ourselves: What is the price of the authority that we do attain? How is it constituted? To what extent does it require identifying ourselves with capitalist or patriarchal forces? Does it reproduce and legitimize patriarchal discourses and practices? Does it suppress other voices?

So too will the value of engaging in confessional practices be measured. To whom is one confessing? To what end? Some forms of self-preoccupation are more politically suspect than others. A retreat into oneself can represent an escape from political reality, or it can be a temporary strategy for getting clear about some of the conditions governing one's choices, and thereby free one up for new ways of thinking, new choices.

So, Foucault's emphasis on self-refusal and displacement could be risky insofar as it might undermine the self-assertion of oppositional groups and suppress the emergence of oppositional consciousness. At the same time, he rightly calls to our attention the risks involved in becoming too comfortable with oneself, one's community, one's sense of reality, one's "truths," the ground on which one's feminist consciousness emerges. Teresa de Lauretis has described feminist theory as requiring

> leaving or giving up a place that is safe, that is "home" — physically, emotionally, linguistically, epistemologically — for another place that is unknown and risky, that is not only emotionally but conceptually other; a place of discourse from which speaking and thinking are at best tentative, uncertain, unguaranteed.[25]

She suggests that this is not so much a choice as it is a necessary feature of feminism. There can be no "home," no completely secure place for women within the context of classist, racist, and heterosexist patriarchal society. Leaving our homes is not a choice, she says, for "one could not live there in the first place."[26] From de Lauretis's point of view, a perspective that I find to be wholly compatible with and better developed than Foucault's account of resistant subjectivity, the feminist subject continually operates both from within and outside of traditions and communities. This "eccentric" perspective, as she

refers to it, is necessary if feminism is to remain critical and to avoid premature and exclusive closure of its categories, communities, and practices. De Lauretis suggests that it has been feminists of color and lesbian feminists — feminists often marginalized in mainstream feminism — who have been the first to recognize the fact that to be a feminist is to constantly put oneself at risk, to be dislocated, to have to remap the "boundaries between identities and communities."[27]

Clearly, it would be a mistake to jettison appeals to identity and confessional truth telling in slavish devotion to Foucault's skepticism. His discourses also bear the traces of his own social and historical location as a white male theorist. Although his homosexuality may have served to sensitize him to the experience of oppression and to the situations of marginal and oppressed groups, it did not prevent him from becoming a leading intellectual force. It is just as important to use Foucault against himself, and against the use of his work to undermine the very struggles he claimed to support, as it is to criticize dangerous tendencies within feminism. But it would also be a mistake to assume uncritically feminist political theories and practices developed in the context of patriarchal capitalism. A critical feminist theory has built into it a certain resistance to identification, or, as de Lauretis describes it, a "dis-identification with femininity" insofar as it has been male-defined.[28] In the final analysis, we have here another example of the double bind characteristic of every situation of oppression. Identity formation is both strategically necessary and dangerous. And, as feminists we must live within the tension and uncertainty produced by our oppressive situations.

Perhaps one of Foucault's most important insights is his insistence that one's theoretical imperatives and commitments be motivated by specific practical imperatives. He wrote from the perspective of a specific intellectual engaged in specific interventions. He was constantly prepared to shift strategies and to question his previous positions. Most of all, he despised dogmatic impositions of theory and the search for universal epistemological or anthropological foundations. It would, of course, be tragically ironic if his discourse were dogmatically imposed on feminism. In the "final" analysis, proof of the value of using Foucault for feminism will be in the puddings, that is, in the practical implications that adopting his methods and insights will have. Attending to the exigencies of feminist practice will

sometimes require that we either ignore Foucault or move beyond him. A Foucauldian feminism would require no less.

Notes

I wish to thank Iris Young, Josephine Donovan, Sandra Bartky, Linda Nicholson, Michael Howard, Roger King, and Tony Brinkley for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this chapter.

1. See, for example, Susan Bordo, "Anorexia Nervosa: Psychopathology as the Crystallization of Culture," in *Feminism and Foucault: Reflections on Resistance,* ed. Irene Diamond and Lee Quimby (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988); Sandra Lee Bartky, "Feminine Masochism and the Politics of Personal Transformations," *Hypatia,* Vol. 7, No. 5, pp. 323–334; Judith Butler, "Variations on Sex and Gender: Beauvoir, Wittig, and Foucault," *Praxis International,* Vol. 5, No. 4 (January 1986), pp. 505–516; Teresa de Lauretis, "Eccentric Subjects: Feminist Theory and Historical Consciousness," *Feminist Studies,* Vol. 16, No. 1 (Spring 1990), pp. 115–150; Nancy Fraser and Linda Nicholson, "Social Criticism Without Philosophy: An Encounter Between Feminism and Postmodernism," paper read at the American Philosophical Association, December 1986; Iris Young, "The Ideal of Community and the Politics of Difference," *Social Theory and Practice,* Vol. 12, No. 5 (Spring 1986), pp. 1–26.

2. Of course, the impact of Foucault's work was different in the United States, where even liberals are on the defensive, than it was in France where Marxism still represents a viable theoretical alternative among the intelligentsia and where there is a mass-based socialist party. There is a danger that Foucault's work could serve to bolster already strong opposition to the idea of radical politics in this country. One critical theorist, Martin Jay, has suggested that Foucault's pluralism has conservative implications as a political strategy in the United States, where liberal pluralism is already presumably operating. See his *Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukacs to Habermas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 513–514, n. 14. It is, of course, important to challenge assimilations of Foucault's discourse that undermine its radical implications. His "pluralism" is, of course, quite distinct from liberal pluralism. It is more akin to the radical pluralist position developed by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics,* trans. Winston Moore and Paul Cammack (London: Verso Press, 1985).

3. Linda Alcoff, "Feminism and Foucault: The Limits to a Collaboration," in *Crises in Continental Philosophy,* ed. Arlene Dallery and Charles Scott (New York: State University of New York Press, 1990), pp. 69–86.

4. Nancy Fraser argues very convincingly that Foucault seems to offer no systematic normative basis for his political interventions in her article, "Foucault on

Modern Power: Empirical Insights and Normative Confusions," *Praxis International,* Vol. 1 (October 1981), pp. 272–287. I agree with Fraser that there is normative confusion in Foucault's critique of modern forms of power/knowledge, particularly as it is developed in *Discipline and Punish.* Some of this confusion is clarified in later interviews and in *The History of Sexuality* when he suggests that he wrote as an engaged and specific intellectual who was not rejecting modernity *tout court,* but rather using genealogy as a means of challenging specific modern practices and specific uses of liberal and liberationist discourses to mask the effects of domination. Moreover, after the publication of *Discipline and Punish,* Foucault attempted to distinguish "power" from "domination." He defines domination as a situation in which a subject is unable to overturn the domination relation, that is, a situation where resistance has been overcome. In contrast, power relations constantly face resistance and the possibility of a reversal. He states:

> In many cases the relations of power are fixed in such a way that they are perpetually asymmetrical and the margin of liberty is extremely limited. To take an example . . . in the traditional conjugal relation in . . . the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, we cannot say that there was only male power; the woman herself could do a lot of things: be unfaithful to him, extract money from him, refuse him sexually. She was, however, subject to a state of domination, in the measure where all that was finally no more than a certain number of tricks which never brought about a reversal of the situation. In these cases of domination — economic, social, institutional, or sexual — the problem is in fact to find out where resistance is going to organize.

See "The Ethic of Care for the Self as a Practice of Freedom: An Interview with Michel Foucault on January 20, 1984," in *The Final Foucault,* ed. James Bernauer and David Rasmussen (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988), pp. 12–13.

Yet, Foucault is never very clear about what makes domination a malevolent phenomenon. He suggests in the above passage that domination interferes with personal liberty, but most often seems to assume that it is self-evident that domination ought to be resisted. (Presumably, from some point "outside" the specific situation of domination.) My own appropriation of Foucault is one that attempts to bypass some of this normative confusion by presupposing a normative framework that includes concepts such as domination, justice, rights, and liberties and regards them as essentially contested concepts. (See especially my "Disciplining Mothers: Feminism and the New Reproductive Technologies," in my *Disciplining Foucault: Feminism, Power and the Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 67–94.

5. Nancy Hartsock, "Rethinking Modernism: Minority vs. Majority Theories," *Cultural Critique,* Vol. 7 (Fall 1987), pp. 187–206; Barbara Christian, "The Race for Theory," *Cultural Critique,* Vol. 6 (Spring 1987), pp. 51–63.

6. Foucault says of his own critique:

> A critique is not a matter of saying that things are not right as they are. It is a matter of pointing out on what kinds of assumptions, what kinds of familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought the practices we accept rest. . . . Thought exists independently of systems and structures of discourse. It is something that is often hidden, but which always animates everyday behavior. There is always a little thought even in the most stupid institutions; there is always thought even in silent habits. . . . Criticism is a matter of flushing out that thought and trying to change it: to show that things are not as self-evident as one believed, to see that what is accepted as self-evident will no longer be accepted as such. . . . In these circumstances, criticism (and radical criticism) is absolutely indispensable for any transformation. . . . [A]s soon as one can no longer think things as one formerly thought them, transformation becomes both very urgent, very difficult and quite possible.

See *Michel Foucault: Politics, Philosophy and Culture — Interviews and Other Writings, 1977–1984*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman, trans. Alan Sheridan and others (New York: Routledge, 1988), p. 154.

7. See John Rajchman's excellent study of Foucault, *Michel Foucault: The Freedom of Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), p. 29ff. for an analysis of Foucault's position as "homosexual author."

8. David Couzens Hoy develops an argument similar to this one in his introduction to *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, ed. David Couzens Hoy (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p. 14ff.

9. This is an essentially pragmatic line of thinking which enables us to appeal to contemporary standards of rationality and justice without grounding them in ahistorical foundations. For a similar line of argument see Nancy Fraser, "Foucault's Body Language: A Posthumanist Political Rhetoric?" in *Unruly Practices* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), pp. 55–66.

10. Evidence that Foucault does not reject appeals to modern forms of rationality is found in the following statement where he discusses the nature of his objections to Jürgen Habermas's idea of a communicative praxis free of coercive constraints and effects. He speaks of the need for the development of "practices of liberty" or an ethics of the self:

> I don't believe that there can be a society without relations of power, if you understand them as means by which individuals try to conduct, to determine the behavior of others. The problem is not of trying to dissolve them in the utopia of a perfectly transparent communication, but to give one's self the rules of law, the techniques of management, and also the ethics, the ethos, the practice of self, which would allow these games of power to be played with a minimum of domination.

See "The Ethic of Care for the Self as a Practice of Freedom," p. 18.

11. Foucault states:

> What we call humanism has been used by Marxists, liberals, Nazis, Catholics. This does not mean that we have to get rid of what we call human rights, but that we can't say that freedom or human rights has to be limited to certain frontiers. . . . What I am afraid of about humanism is that it presents a certain form of our ethics as a universal model for any kind of freedom. I think that there are more secrets, more possible freedoms, and more inventions in our future than we can imagine in humanism as it is dogmatically represented on every side of the political rainbow.

See "Truth, Power, Self: An Interview with Michel Foucault," in *Technologies of the Self,* ed. Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, and Patrick Hutton (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), p. 15.

12. In one of his last interviews Foucault commented:

> I do not mean to say that liberation or such and such a form of liberation does not exist. When a colonial people tries to free itself of its colonizer, that is truly an act of liberation, in the strict sense of the word. But as we also know, . . . in this extremely precise example, this act of liberation is not sufficient to establish the practices of liberty that later will be necessary for this people, this society and these individuals to decide upon receivable and acceptable forms of their existence or political society.

See "The Ethic of Care for the Self as a Practice of Freedom," p. 3.

13. Rajchman, *Michel Foucault: The Freedom of Philosophy,* p. 38.

14. See my "Feminism and the Power of Foucauldian Discourse," in *Disciplining Foucault,* pp. 49–66.

15. I use "we" here as both a provocation and an invitation and not with the presumption that it captures the sentiments of all women who identify as feminists. Moreover, as my imperatives indicate, I clearly do not believe that feminists should refrain from making political judgments.

16. See Ann Ferguson, "Sex War: The Debate between Radical and Libertarian Feminists," *Signs,* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1984), pp. 106–112. See also, Ferguson, *Blood at the Root: Motherhood, Sexuality and Male Domination* (London: Pandora Press, 1989).

17. See Chris Weedon, *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1987) for a similar account of Foucault's subject.

18. The subject presupposed in Foucault's later discourses resembles the creative, nihilating subject found in the writings of French existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre.

19. Alison Jaggar and Rachel Martin develop the outlines of an alternative model of consciousness-raising in "Literacy: New Words for a New World," paper delivered at Sofphia, October 1988, Mt. Holyoke College.

20. Sandra Bartky, "Toward a Phenomenology of Feminist Consciousness," *Feminism and Philosophy,* ed. Mary Vetterling-Braggin, Frederick Elliston, and Jane English (Totowa, NJ: Littlefield, Adams and Co., 1981), pp. 22–34.

21. See Caren Kaplan, "Deterritorialization: The Rewriting of Home and Exile in Western Feminist Discourse," *Cultural Critique,* Vol. 6 (Spring 1987), p. 191.

22. Christian, "The Race for Theory," p. 57ff.

23. In her book *Gender Trouble,* Judith Butler develops a powerful argument against the idea that feminist theorists need to develop a unified account of feminine identity as a common ground for feminist politics. She endorses Foucault's descriptions of modern sexual identities as principal targets of dominating regulatory mechanisms and offers a radical critique of the political construction of identity. When I speak of the dangers of Foucault's strategy of self-refusal for feminism, and of its dangers for women who have little sense of self to refuse, I am not suggesting that the remedy is to build a unified feminist subject, but rather to develop the sense of self-esteem, confidence, and autonomy necessary for actively resisting the domination associated with former identities that were often assumed unconsciously. Presumably, building this sort of self is not only compatible with a radical inquiry into the political regulation of identity, but also necessary for it. In other words, I am not claiming that feminism requires any essentialist view of feminine identity to underpin its politics, but rather that feminist politics requires agents who are capable of self-assertion and self-esteem. In effect, I am arguing against a possible effect of Foucault's strategy of self-refusal, namely the further disempowerment of oppressed groups. See *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

24. Adrienne Rich, "Resisting Amnesia: History and Personal Life," *Blood, Bread, and Poetry: Selected Prose, 1979–1985* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1986), p. 144.

25. Teresa de Lauretis, "Eccentric Subjects: Feminist Theory and Historical Consciousness," *Feminist Studies,* Vol. 16, No. 1 (Spring 1990), p. 138.

26. Ibid., pp. 138–139.

27. Ibid., p. 138.

28. Ibid., p. 126.

15

Foucault, Habermas, and the Self-Referentiality of Critique

Michael Kelly

> We must not limit our critique of relationships of power to those institutions in which power is overtly declared, hence to political and social power only; we must extend it to those areas of life in which power is hidden behind the amiable countenance of cultural familiarity.
>
> — *Habermas*

Jürgen Habermas objects to Michel Foucault's paradigm of critique because of its alleged "presentism," "relativism," and "cryptonormativism," which can be summarized as follows:

> Foucault cannot adequately deal with the persistent problems that come up in connection with an interpretation approach to the object domain, a self-referential denial of universal validity claims, and a normative justification of critique. The categories of meaning, validity, and value are . . . eliminated. . . .[1]

Foucault's paradigm, according to Habermas, (a) is "hermeneutically stuck in its startling situation" (*PDM,* 276), (b) denies that there are any universals (except perhaps the paradoxical universal that there are no universals), and (c) invokes critical norms that cannot be justified since justification requires universals. These problems are the consequences of Foucault's "attempt to preserve the transcendental moment proper to generative performances in the basic concept of power while driving from it every trace of subjectivity. This concept of power does not free the genealogist from contradictory self-thematizations" (*PDM,* 294–295). In short, despite Habermas's own call in the epigraph for a broader notion and critique of power,

he argues that Foucault's attempts in this direction fail because his notion of power underlies and undermines his notion of critique.[2]

In defending Foucault against Habermas's charges, I will first sketch a reading of *Discipline and Punish* which is an alternative to Habermas's in order to identify the interpretations of Foucault which underlie both Habermas's critique and my response to it.[3] I will then clarify Foucault's notions of "disciplinary power" and "local critique," recognizing that while Habermas may misunderstand them, some of the misunderstandings undoubtedly arise from Foucault's own unclarity. Finally, I will use my interpretation and clarification to recast the Foucault/Habermas debate in terms of the predicament of critique in modernity, which is briefly as follows.

Foucault and Habermas agree that modern natural and human sciences must justify their claims to truth and justice, respectively, for they can no longer rely on religion, metaphysics, or any other traditional, normative bases of these claims. Critique is the philosophical part of these sciences which provides such justification. At the same time, critique must be able to justify its own norms. For how can critique justify any truth or justice claims without being able to do the same for itself? For example, how can ethics legitimately use a universalization principle to determine which ethical norms are valid without justifying that very principle? The problem, in short, is that a self-referential critique is required, but it may very well be hopelessly paradoxical. Foucault and Habermas have both struggled with this problem of the self-referentiality of modern critique, and I think it is the gravity of this shared problem which makes it important to recast their debate so that philosophically adequate responses to it can be developed and defended.

I Habermas's Critique of Foucault

I met Foucault only in 1983, and perhaps I did not understand him well.
— *Habermas*

Habermas's critique of Foucault is largely based on a single text, *Discipline and Punish,* and even more specifically on a particular interpretation of that text:

> Here we touch on a further theme that Foucault will pursue with ever greater clarity: the constitutive connection between the human sciences and the practices of supervisory isolation. The birth of the psychiatric institution and of the clinic in general is exemplary for a form of disciplining that Foucault will describe later on purely and simply as the modern technology of domination. The archetype of the closed institution, which Foucault initially discovers in the clinically transformed world of the asylum, turns up again in the forms of the factory, the prison, the barracks, the school, and the military academy. In these total institutions . . . Foucault perceives the monuments to victory of a regulatory reason. . . . (*PDM,* 244–245)

There is a continuity of subject matter between Foucault's earlier writings and *Discipline and Punish,* according to Habermas (*PDM,*242); he thus interprets *Discipline and Punish* as part of a larger project of tracing the augmentation of "regulatory reason" in modern society.[4] At the same time, however, he acknowledges and even emphasizes a radical shift in methodology beginning with *Discipline and Punish* due to the introduction of the notion of power (*PDM,* 266–270). Habermas thus argues that there is both a continuity of subject matter and a *dis*continuity of methodology in Foucault's philosophy.

Although a shift in methodology does not necessarily presuppose or imply a change in subject matter, it does raise some doubt whether Foucault was indeed pursing the same subject matter from *Madness and Civilization* up through *Discipline and Punish.* Perhaps the change in methodology was in fact instigated by a change in subject matter from the axis of knowledge to the axis of power, to use the late Foucault's terminology.[5] This is an important possibility to consider in relation to Habermas's interpretation; for his claim that there is a continuity of subject matter is the key to his argument that Foucault was developing a self-referential theory of regulatory reason.

Habermas's interpretation of Foucault unquestionably has some basis in *Discipline and Punish,* but it plays off an ambiguity in the text. Is Foucault primarily investigating the French prison in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, even though he also makes comparisons between discipline in the prison and in other social institutions? Or is he primarily analyzing modern society as a whole, which is carceral because of the dissemination and dominance of disciplinary power, that is, because modern society is run, in effect, as a prison? Habermas clearly opts for the second reading; and his critique of Foucault focuses on the theoretical presuppositions of

power inherent in the notion of the carceral society, as well as on the practical implications of such power for critical theory. But an interpretation of Foucault based on the first reading of *Discipline and Punish* is not only possible but equally and, I think, more plausible.

Before examining the consequences such an interpretation will have for Habermas's critique of Foucault, let me first discuss the ambiguity in *Discipline and Punish,* which is captured by the following two statements:

> I shall study the birth of the prison only in the French penal system. Differences in historical development and institutions would make a detailed comparative examination too burdensome and any attempt to describe the phenomenon as a whole too schematic. (*DP,* 309 n. 3)
>
> At this point I end a book that must serve as a historical background to various studies of the power of normalization and the formation of knowledge in modern society. (*DP,* 308)

The first statement is one of the earliest notes to the text, while the second is the very last note which also serves as the conclusion to the whole book.[6] It is easy to see that the interpretation of Foucault will differ tremendously depending on which of these two (types of) statements is emphasized.

Yet how can a study of the birth of one country's penal system possibly serve as a historical background for studies of power and knowledge in modern society? Foucault's account of the French penal system does involve an account of the French social system, since "punishment is a complex social function" (*DP,* 23); but neither account alone nor the two together could suffice as the background for a theory of modern society as a whole. They would have to be combined with many related studies, which Foucault never provided. It thus seems that Foucault is engaged either in a narrower project than Habermas assumes, or else in a more ambitious one that could not stand on its own — which would explain why Habermas insists on the continuity of subject matter within Foucault's various texts. So which project is Foucault's? How can we decide between the two readings if the text is ambiguous?

For three reasons, I think Foucault's analysis in *Discipline and Punish* is first and foremost a discussion of the French prison and social system and not one of modern society in general: (1) the bulk of the

text supports only the narrower or "local" project;[7] (2) Foucault's own interpretation of the notion of power in *Discipline and Punish* does not focus on the carceral society;[8] (3) his notion of "local critique" is linked to narrowly circumscribed genealogical analyses rather than to global theories about modern society.[9] The second two points will be discussed in section 2, which leaves the immediate question of what to make of Foucault's statements in *Discipline and Punish* which challenge my first point (see especially *DP*, 176, 209, 224).

Although they cannot be ignored, such statements do not imply what Habermas thinks. In contrast to Foucault's other texts, where he analyzes single institutions in their specificity rather than with respect to the features they may share with other institutions, he does discuss the general features of all disciplinary practices in *Discipline and Punish* (see *DP*, 138–139, 195–228). Nevertheless, the point there is not to construct an archetype of the modern "closed" institution, but to argue that individual practices and institutions operate within a larger disciplinary regime through which the general features they share — Bentham's panopticon in particular (*DP*, 200ff.) — are anonymously disseminated: "This book is intended as a correlative history of the modern soul and of a new power to judge; a genealogy of the present scientifico-legal complex from which the power to punish derives its bases, justifications and rules, from which it extends its effects and by which it masks its exorbitant singularity" (*DP*, 23).

Of course, the mere mention of a disciplinary regime based on the panopticon which "extends its effects" is precisely what makes Habermas think Foucault is analyzing modern society as a whole (*PDM*, 289). This makes it even more imperative that Foucault's comments about the panopticon be understood in the context of his discussion of Bentham's discursive ideal of the prison and other institutions.

> In reference to the reduction of my analysis to that simplistic figure which is the metaphor of the Panopticon, I think that . . . it is easy to show that the analyses of power which I have made cannot at all be reduced to this figure . . . it is also true that I . . . showed that what we are talking about is precisely a utopia which had never functioned in the form in which it existed. . . .[10]

That is, Foucault's purpose in analyzing the panopticon is neither to present a historical account of the concrete establishment of a carceral society nor to offer a pessimistic prognosis of how such a society will eventually materialize either in France or in modern society. The archetype here is Bentham's, not Foucault's. Even if Bentham's archetype had been realized in the mid–nineteenth century, it would have been a transient affair, as are all historical phenomena. That is, a disciplinary society of that time, which followed the society of sovereignty, would have been succeeded by something else, perhaps by what Gilles Deleuze calls the society of control.[11]

Moreover, Foucault emphasizes in *Discipline and Punish* that the disciplines linked to the panopticon were first used in secondary education, then primary schools, then the hospital, then the military barracks, and only later the prisons (*DP*, 136–138, 224). So the panopticon was not dispersed into society from the prison; on the contrary. Elsewhere, he describes how he first came upon the panopticon in his research on hospitals.[12] It is for these reasons, and in light of his empirical approach, that Foucault was not surprised "that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons" (*DP*, 228).[13] That is, his account of the deployment of the panopticon in different institutions is based on historical evidence which does not presuppose a theory of the augmentation of power in modern society. Nor does it necessarily lead to such a theory. For Foucault argues, in fact, that even as the panopticon seemed destined to spread throughout the entire social body (*DP*, 207, 297–298), even as it was generalized from the hospital to the prison and beyond, there were limits to its extension, even in the French system:

> There is no risk . . . that the increase of power created by the panoptic machine may degenerate into tyranny; the disciplinary mechanism will be democratically controlled, since it will be constantly accessible "to the great tribunal committee of the world." . . . The seeing machine . . . has become a transparent building in which the exercise of power may be supervised by society as a whole. (*DP*, 207)[14]

Finally, as Jana Sawicki emphasizes, the inflammatory rhetoric in *Discipline and Punish* about the carceral society has to be understood in relation to Foucault's challenge to the equally inflammatory humanist rhetoric of progress; for he is criticizing in particular the

humanist account of the birth of the prison (*DP*, 16, 23–24; also 75, 80–82, 92, 101, 104–131).[15] In summary, and to let Foucault explain his position, "I always analyze quite precise and localized phenomena: for example, the formation of disciplinary systems in eighteenth-century Europe. I don't do this in order to say that Western civilization is a 'disciplinary civilization' in all its aspects."[16]

II A Response to Habermas's Critique

The significance of my admittedly sketchy alternative interpretation of *Discipline and Punish* is that it illuminates the basis of my response to Habermas's critique of Foucault. By expanding on my interpretation I will answer Habermas's charges that Foucault is engaged in (1) a self-referential, total critique of reason (2) in the form of a transcendental, genealogical historiography (3), which is itself based on a theory of all-encompassing power: "the entire weight of the problematic [of critique] rests on the basic concept of power" (*PDM*, 249; also 269–270). I will begin with Foucault's self-interpretation in "Critical Theory/Intellectual History," where he offers perhaps the most complete account of his intellectual development from *Madness and Civilization* to *The History of Sexuality*, and where he makes it clear, I think, that he is always engaged in critique, albeit a form of it that Habermas does not accept.

Foucault's philosophical career began in the early 1950s with an effort to break from the phenomenological model of the subject of history, according to which an autonomous, rational subject constitutes the meaning of history. Believing instead that history is not entirely of the subject's making and that reason itself is historical, Foucault embarks on a project to understand the problem of historicity on two levels: the subject and reason. There were several alternative models of the subject and reason available to him at the time — psychoanalysis, Marxism, and structuralism. Although he utilizes concepts and distinctions from these "movements," he does not adopt any of them because they did not help him to understand this two-tier historicity.[17] He turns instead to two philosophers, Kant and Nietzsche. From Kant he inherits the Enlightenment analysis of how the modern subject and reason acceded to autonomy; while from Nietzsche he learns that the ascendancy of the subject and reason

which defines modernity is a historical struggle that leaves its ontological signature on autonomy.[18]

In developing new models of the subject and reason rooted in historicity and articulated with the help of an unholy alliance of Kant and Nietzsche, Foucault investigates different forms of rationality as they are applied by human subjects to themselves.[19] His questions are, "[H]ow is it that the human subject took itself as the object of possible knowledge? Through what forms of rationality and historical conditions? And finally at what price . . . can subjects speak the truth about themselves?"[20] *Madness and Civilization* and *The Birth of the Clinic* analyze these questions in relation to mad and sick subjects; *The Order of Things* in relation to speaking, working, and living subjects; *Discipline and Punish* treats the criminal subject; and *The History of Sexuality* focuses on the desiring subject. Foucault analyzes the modern subject in all but the last text; even there, however, he is engaged in the genealogy of the modern subject.

In general, Foucault criticizes the dominant forms of rationality since the Enlightenment — "scientific thought, technical apparatus, and political organization" — and he argues that they need to be transformed.[21] Yet at no time does he argue that reason itself is collapsing: "I cannot see any disappearance of that kind. I can see multiple transformations, but I cannot see why we should call this transformation a collapse of reason."[22] Or, as Foucault also expresses it, "The rationality of the abominable is a fact of contemporary history. The irrational, however, does not, because of that, acquire any indefeasible rights."[23] In this light, his interest is not unlike Habermas's: to critique the historical transformations of modern forms of rationality.[24]

But, Habermas might interject here, are Foucault's studies of the modern subject and forms of rationality intended to be descriptive or critical? The genealogy of forms of rationality, says Foucault, "serves to show how that-which-is has not always been; i.e., that the things which seem most evident to us are always formed in the confluence of encounters and chances, during the course of a precarious and fragile history."[25] But such a genealogical account is not merely descriptive; it is also linked to the problem of critique: "[E]xperience has taught me that the history of various forms of rationality is sometimes more effective in unsettling our certitudes and dogmatism than

is abstract criticism."[26] The result of our knowing that a form of rationality had a concrete starting point in history is that we can conceive of its not being that way any longer. Critique is thus linked to the "space of concrete freedom, i.e., of possible transformation."[27] In short, Foucault's strategy is to argue that since forms of rationality have been made they can be unmade: "In reality, what I want to do, and here is the difficulty of trying to do it, is to solve this problem: to work out an interpretation, a reading of a certain reality, which might be such that, on the one hand, this interpretation could produce some of the effects of truth; and on the other hand, these effects of truth could become implements within possible struggles."[28]

Yet even if historical knowledge acquired through genealogy can open our eyes to a critique of present forms of rationality and the possibility of their transformation, critique and change do not automatically follow genealogy. Foucault is aware of this, and he explicitly argues that, as even the above quotes imply, genealogy is not yet critique and critique is not yet transformation.[29] Ethical-political action fills the gap in both cases, making possibilities opened up by genealogy into actualities confirmed by critique and then put into transformative practice. The results are themselves objects of further genealogy-critique-transformation. Being historical, the process here is ongoing, fallible, and self-corrective.

Of course, in making these distinctions between genealogy, critique, and transformation, Foucault is not likely to appease Habermas, who insists on normative accountability at every level. According to what criteria does genealogy become critique and critique become transformation? So interpreting Foucault in this way may only make the task of responding to Habermas all the more difficult. Nevertheless, the distinctions are important because they clarify the methodology within which normative accountability becomes an issue for Foucault, allowing him to address it on his own terms. That is, they clarify where the norms come into play, which norms are at issue, and what mode of justification is appropriate to them. Only then can Foucault respond to the Habermasian critique that his discourse of modernity lacks justification and thus is indeed fallible but not self-corrective.[30]

In order to show how Foucault can deal with this issue of normativity in more depth and thereby respond to Habermas's charge of "cryptonormativism," one of the three charges mentioned in the introduction, I will now address two questions at length: (1) What is disciplinary power? (2) What are the normative presuppositions and aims of local critique?

Power

Foucault explains his notion of power in "Two Lectures" by distinguishing between "disciplinary power" and "juridical power": "I would say that we should direct our researches on the nature of power not towards the juridical edifice of sovereignty, the State apparatuses and the ideologies which accompany them, but towards domination and the material operators of power, towards forms of subjection and the inflections and utilisations of their localised systems, and towards strategic apparatuses."[31] Sawicki summarizes the distinction as follows. According to the juridical model,

1. power is possessed (for instance, by individuals in the state of nature, by a class, by the people);
2. power flows from a centralized source from top to bottom (for instance, law, the economy, the state); and
3. power is primarily repressive in its exercise (a prohibition backed by sanctions).

While according to the disciplinary model,

1. power is exercised rather than possessed;
2. power is analyzed as coming from the bottom up; and
3. power is not primarily repressive, but productive.[32]

Disciplinary power is so far defined negatively over against juridical power. But why did Foucault introduce it? What purposes does it serve?

I have been led to address the question of power only to the extent that the political [juridical] analysis of power, which was offered did not seem to me to account for the finer, more detailed phenomena I wish to evoke when I pose the question of telling the truth about oneself. If I tell the truth about myself, as I am now doing, it is in part that I am constituted as a subject

across a number of power relations which are exerted over me and which I exert over others.[33]

The notion of disciplinary power is thus introduced in order to analyze what the juridical notion cannot grasp: "those forms of power which make centralized, repressive forms of power possible, namely, the myriad of power relations at the microlevel of society."[34] In the case of the prison, for example, Foucault argues that the juridical model is insufficient to explain how the prison emerged, how it has developed, and what role it has played in society. In the case of sexuality, where the juridical model takes the form of the "repressive hypothesis," his point is not that there is no such thing as sexual repression, nor even that this hypothesis cannot explain certain dimensions of sexuality. Rather, he claims that significant aspects of sexual behavior cannot be accounted for under the hypothesis that sexuality is law-governed. These other aspects are revealed and studied by analyzing the different ways that sexuality has been problematized in history.[35] And, finally, in the case of ethics, Foucault does not focus on moral-juridical codes, but on how we problematize our behavior as ethical before we articulate the codes, and then how we conduct ourselves in relation to the codes once they have been articulated.[36] As Arnold Davidson formulates it, "Foucault wanted to shift the emphasis to 'how the individual is supposed to constitute himself as a moral subject of his own actions,' without, however, denying the importance of either the moral code or the actual behavior of people."[37]

What exactly is the relationship, however, between juridical and disciplinary power? This is a key point of misunderstanding and contention between Foucault and Habermas, especially since Foucault once said that it is time in political theory to cut off the head of the king, the arch symbol of the law, as if to imply that the two modes of power are incompatible.[38] Despite that claim, there are now two modes and analyses of power — disciplinary and juridical — which are not necessarily incompatible, though they do compete and conflict; they are, in short, correlative.[39] For although Foucault does not talk much about the legal sphere, he never abandoned the notion of juridical power. In fact, his analyses of historical forms of rationality presuppose the regime and rule of law. From the very beginning

of *Discipline and Punish,* for example, Foucault focuses on the historical transition from punishment as infliction of pain on the body to punishment as the suspension of bourgeois rights (*DP,* 10–11). While the suspension that disciplinary power realizes is never absent, it is also "never total" (*DP,* 223).[40] For example, Foucault points out that one can enter a disciplinary institution voluntarily under a bourgeois contract, though once one has entered things are different (as is clear today when, for instance, one contractually takes a job in private industry) (*DP,* 222). And when he discusses processes of normalization governed by disciplinary power, he emphasizes that they function within a system of formal equality (*DP,* 184).[41]

Foucault therefore acknowledges, if only and perhaps too implicitly, that there is indeed a regime determined by the kind of symmetry and reciprocity that, for Habermas, characterizes modern law and moral-practical relations between modern, autonomous subjects. But that regime exists alongside of a second regime determined by practices, institutions, and knowledges that are characterized by asymmetrical and nonreciprocal relations which form the "dark side" of the bourgeois, egalitarian juridical framework (*DP,* 222–223). Moreover, not only can this second regime not be understood through the notions of symmetry and reciprocity, the regime of law cannot be fully understood without its other side. For example, insofar as the law reaches into nonjuridical dimensions of society, juridical power itself cannot be fully grasped without reference to the disciplines Foucault analyzes (*DP,* 19–22). It is in this sense that, as I said earlier, the two modes of power are correlative.[42]

Habermas's concern is that asymmetrical and nonreciprocal relations of the regime of power represent the only type that Foucault allows between subjects in modern society. If that were true, I might share his worry. But Foucault did not hold such a view, as I think a clarification of his notion of the "gaze" will show. This notion is important because it is under the gaze, Habermas fears, that the rational subject "has lost all merely intuitive bonds with his environment and torn down all the bridges built up of intersubjective agreement," while "other subjects are only accessible [to him] as the objects of nonparticipant observation" (*PDM,* 245–246).

Foucault analyzes the processes through which subjects make objects (madmen, patients, delinquents) out of themselves in the course

of establishing certain practices and institutions (asylum, clinic, prison) and establishing new sciences (psychology, medicine, penology). The gaze, a technique of observation, is central to all these processes (*DP*, 173–177); as such, it does not have merely or even primarily a negative role, but a positive and productive one as well by making psychological, medical, and penal knowledges and practices possible. In fact, one of the four general rules of *Discipline and Punish* is to concentrate on the "positive effects of punitive mechanisms" (*DP*, 23). One of the main positive effects is the creation of the "science of the individual," which achieved a great "epistemological thaw" by breaking down a barrier established when Aristotle argued that there could never be a science of the individual (*DP*, 24, 167, 191, 224). Another positive effect stems from the medical gaze analyzed in *The Birth of the Clinic*. The medical gaze shifted the physician's attention in the study of disease from the nosological chart to the body, specifically to the corpse in the newly introduced practice of the autopsy, thus opening up the path for modern techniques of medical care and intervention.[43] Foucault certainly does not embrace all aspects of modern medicine, and he does say that the genealogy of medicine opens up possibilities of transforming it; nor does he reject those aspects in toto, any more than *Madness and Civilization* was intended to be a total condemnation of psychiatry.[44]

As for the subjects Foucault studies in his various texts, they are "accessible" to one another in a variety of ways, depending on the practice or institution in question; they are not just accessible to one another as objects since they are also the subjects in and of these processes (*DP*, 222–223). Moreover, when subjects do relate to themselves as objects under the gaze, it is only for the purpose of developing medicine, problematizing sexuality, or developing some discursive or nondiscursive practice. In other words, they do not permanently transform themselves into objects, nor even into subjects who can relate only to objects. In all these respects, Foucault's discussion of the gaze must be part of the larger picture of modern subjectivity, including the conditions of intersubjectivity which are Habermas's particular concern. In short, I think Habermas's concern that the gaze turns subjects into objects and leaves no bridges to intersubjectivity is unfounded.

To get back to the distinction between disciplinary and juridical power, the problem is of course how to distinguish the two regimes, how to characterize each one, and particularly how to ascertain the extent to which they affect one another. This last issue is particularly important because the regimes of law and power are constantly at loggerheads. To be able to address it adequately, we need both Foucault and Habermas, if Foucault is indeed right that the two types of power are correlative.

The notion of disciplinary power does, however, realign the relationships between truth, right, and power; and I think it is this realignment, not power alone, which incites Habermas's objections here. Traditionally, according to Foucault, the question involving such relationships would be (and still is for Habermas), "How is the discourse of truth (philosophy) able to set limits to the rights of power?" Foucault wants to shift the question to "What rules of right are implemented by the relations of power in the production of discourses of truth?" Implied in this second question is a network of relations between the effects of truth (the analytic of truth), the rules of right, and the mechanisms of power (the ontology of the present). What Habermas objects to is the sense in which these three axes — and especially the relationships between truth and power and between right and power — are inseparable in (discursive) practice, though analytically distinguishable. More precisely, what he objects to is not just Foucault's claim that truth and right have power, or that power cannot be exercised except through the production of truth and with the aid of right, but that power is to some extent constitutive of (the discourses of) truth and right, and of knowledge as a whole.[45]

Foucault's position is best expressed in his own words:

> [W]e should abandon a whole tradition that allows us to imagine that knowledge can exist only where the power relations are suspended and that knowledge can develop only outside its injunctions, its demands and interests. . . . We should admit rather that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); . . . that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. These "power-knowledge relations" are to be analysed, therefore, not on the basis of a subject of knowledge who is or is not free in relation to the power system, but, on the contrary, the subject who knows, the objects to be known and the modalities of knowledge

must be regarded as so many effects of these fundamental implications of power-knowledge and their historical transformations. (*DP*, 27–28)

This does not mean, however, that Foucault reduces knowledge to power: "[W]hen I read — and I know it has been attributed to me — the thesis, 'Knowledge is power,' or 'Power is knowledge,' I begin to laugh, since studying their *relation* is precisely my problem. . . . The very fact that I pose the question of their relation proves clearly that I do not *identify* them."[46]

Since these same statements hold for critique and power as for knowledge and power, I want now to discuss the philosophical profile of the critique/power relationship, remembering that Habermas thinks Foucault's paradigm of critique is self-refuting because of its link to power.[47]

"Local Critique"

Foucault analyzes the interrelationships between truth, power, and right — or his later triad of knowledge, power, and self — under the rubric of "local critique," a notion he also introduced in "Two Lectures." Disciplinary power thus does not undermine at least this new type of critique. But how does local critique operate? What are its normative presuppositions? How are they justified?

Foucault introduces the notion of "local critique" while reflecting on his research between 1970 and 1976, which he says was inspired by events that, in turn, provided it with a type of "local" justification.[48] The research was justified so long as it was deemed "adequate to a restricted period, that of the last ten, fifteen, at most twenty years, a period notable for two events": (1) dispersed and discontinuous offensives in psychiatry, morality, penal systems, sexuality, and so forth, which combined to introduce a mode of "local criticism" that is distinct as "an autonomous, non-centralised kind of theoretical production, one that is to say whose validity is not dependent on the approval of the established regime of thought"; and (2) an "insurrection of subjugated knowledges" of two types — "historical contents that have been buried and disguised in a functionalist coherence or formal systemisation" (e.g., political struggles tied to the birth of the clinic), and "knowledges that have been disqualified

as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated" (e.g., popular knowledge of the sick person relative to the official knowledge of medicine).[49]

Foucault defines his genealogical method in relation to this notion of local critique, and in contrast to the reigning regimes of scientific, totalizing discourse.[50] Genealogy focuses on "the claims of local, discontinuous, disqualified, illegitimate knowledges against the claims of a unitary body of theory which would filter, hierarchise and order them in the name of some true knowledge and some arbitrary idea of what constitutes a science and its objects."[51] In addition, genealogy is linked, as we saw earlier, to critical and emancipatory discourse and practice, for the historical recovery of local discursivities undermines the reigning scientific discourse and liberates hitherto subjugated knowledges, discourses, and practices.[52]

Now, if the task of "local critique" with genealogy as its tool is clearer, so too are the types of normative questions Habermas argues Foucault must answer. To illustrate this last point, take the case of the birth in 1979 of the specialty of emergency medicine in the United States, which Dr. Ricardo Sanchez and I have analyzed elsewhere.[53]

The birth of emergency medicine, according to the unified scientific discourse of this new specialty, is almost exclusively the result of autonomous advances in medical technology, such as the ability to resuscitate people who only twenty years ago would never have had a second chance at life. What is left out of this discourse is the genealogical fact that emergency medicine began in large part in response to the growing number of disenfranchised patients who in the same twenty-year period have been showing up at the emergency room, the gateway to the hospital, demanding immediate attention and presenting unique medical cases. If the local discourse of the emergency patient were no longer buried, disguised, or disqualified by the dominant scientific discourse, the disenfranchised emergency patient would be recognized as having a constitutive role in the birth of emergency medicine. What effects would such recognition have? What would happen once the formerly excluded, local discursivity of the patient is incorporated into the technico-medical discourse of emergency medicine? Would that expanded discourse be any less unified and exclusive than it was before? What effect would its ex-

pansion have on the "truth" of emergency-medical knowledge, which has to be identified for the practice to be officially recognized, and on the "power" of this knowledge, that is, the delivery of emergency care? Foucault can and in fact does answer these kinds of questions in *The Birth of the Clinic,* as well as analogous questions in his studies of other institutions.

The outstanding normative issue underlying these questions concerns the justification of local critique itself. Foucault's response would be, to continue with the same example, that it is justified within the discursive space of the practice of emergency medicine, that is, where the local knowledge of the emergency patient was first subjugated and excluded and is now released. Further analysis and development of that discourse and practice will reveal how both the earlier questions and the question of justification can be answered, whether the answers are sufficient, and whether the following additional questions can be answered: Does this type of justification depend, in this case, on the emancipation of the emergency medical patient or of emergency medicine in general? Is local critique in fact justified by emancipation? If so, what is emancipated: the (subjugated) discourse, the people affected by that discourse, the expanded practice, or all three? If not, what precisely is it in the local discursive space of emergency medicine which justifies the critique of the birth of emergency medicine? Again, these kinds of questions are not new to Foucault, for he addresses them in each of his texts in relation to individual, local knowledges. For example:

> The research that I am undertaking here [*The Birth of the Clinic*] . . . is deliberately both historical and critical, in that it is concerned . . . with determining the conditions of possibility of medical experience. . . .[54]
>
> The criticism of power wielded over the mentally sick or mad cannot be restricted to psychiatric institutions. . . . The question is: how are such relations of power rationalized? Asking it is the only way to avoid other institutions, with the same objectives and the same effects, from taking their stead.[55]

An additional and related objection continuously raised by Habermas is how resistance is possible under the aegis of local critique and over against pervasive disciplinary power.[56] Foucault argues that his discursive analyses are politically relevant because they unearth the

politics of discourse; that is, the political relevance of discursive analysis is immanent (not applied later on) because discourse itself is political.[57] But the next question is how this political relevance can become concrete resistance capable of justifying its norms of critique and action.

This problem is not as great as it may seem at first because it is based on the mistaken assumption that disciplinary power is unassailable in principle. For Foucault, resistance is inseparable from power — where there is power there is resistance.[58] As Sawicki has noted, this inseparability could mean either that power relations arise only where resistance and conflict exist, or "that wherever there is a relation of power it is possible to modify its hold."[59] Foucault defends the latter claim, which is stronger because it implies a connection between power and freedom: "Power is exercised only over free subjects and only insofar as they are free."[60] Moreover, contrary to Habermas's claims, this presupposition of freedom is, first of all, not undermined by power, since power implies resistance which implies freedom; second, freedom is not "crypto," for Foucault explicitly understands it as "the ontological condition of ethics";[61] third, it is justified, not merely as a mode of power, but as a constitutive feature of modernity; fourth, as Ian Hacking argues, those who criticize Foucault for not giving freedom more justification than this might start their critique with Kant.[62] As for the more specific norms governing resistance — who should resist what, when, and how, and whether some forms of resistance are more desirable than others — Foucault argues that critique "should be an instrument for those who fight."[63] That is, he addresses these normative questions about resistance as practical issues, and ones that are therefore justified in the context of a practice (e.g., emergency medicine). The demands of critique arise from and are met by practice.

III Foucault, Habermas, and Modernity

It is both surprising and unfortunate that Habermas persistently derides Foucault's critique of modern forms of rationality, because the two philosophers share a common problem: how to practice modern critique in a philosophical manner given its self-referentiality. There is no essential difference between the self-referentiality of Foucault's

paradigm of critique and the self-referentiality of critique that Habermas himself identifies as a defining characteristic of modernity.[64] For Habermas to accuse Foucault of being undermined by a predicament he also faces only obscures their common concern, thereby creating a barrier to their debate. I think this obscurity can be dispelled and the debate opened up again if Foucault's and Habermas's respective notions of modernity and critique are clarified.[65]

In Foucault's words, modernity is more of an attitude than a historical period, an attitude "described as a permanent critique of our historical era" in the pursuit of enlightenment.[66] For Habermas, "Modernity can and will no longer borrow the criteria by which it takes its orientation from the models supplied by another epoch; *it has to create its normativity out of itself*" (*PDM*, 7).[67] If Foucault's and Habermas's characterizations of modernity are conjoined, the result is that "the permanent activation of a critical attitude" inaugurates modernity's task of "creating its own normativity." That modernity is critical toward its own present and that it must perpetually create its own normativity are thus points on which Foucault and Habermas agree. Yet they do not agree on how this normativity is justified, or on whether the validity of this normativity is as local as the historical context out of which it emerges and toward which its critical eye is vigilantly turned.

Foucault elaborates on his notions of modernity and critique by interpreting Kant's essays on the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, two events which are the "forms under which Kant posed the question of his own present."[68] The relevant issue for philosophy today, according to Foucault, is not what specific doctrinal part of the Enlightenment or French Revolution should be preserved as a model; rather, it is to know what is to be done with that attitude or ethos of enlightenment and will to revolution.[69] This attitude is therefore more procedural than substantive, to use Habermas's terms, since it abstracts from the particular historical content of the Enlightenment, the Revolution, and the (then) present. Kant

> opened philosophy up to a whole historico-critical dimension. And this work always involves two objectives . . .: on the one hand, to look for the moment . . . when the West first asserted the autonomy and sovereignty of its own rationality. . . . On the other hand, to analyze the "present" moment

and . . . to look for that relation which must be established with this founding act [of reason's autonomy].[71]

What the Enlightenment inaugurates is, in a word, critique.[72]

These points are particularly relevant to Foucault's debate with Habermas, especially the first of the three charges — "presentism" — raised in the introduction. First, the present is not just referred to in philosophy as one of many objects of reflection; according to Foucault, it is "a certain contemporaneity that it [philosophy] questions as an event . . . whose meaning, value, philosophical particularity it is its task to bring out."[73] But not only must philosophy identify and bring out this particularity, it must also understand the present as that "in which it has to find both its own raison d'être and the grounds for what it says." The present is "the philosophical event to which the philosopher who speaks of it belongs."[74] Thus, the object, context, and ground of philosophical reflection is the same: the present as discursive and historical contemporaneity.

Foucault links the emergence of this question of the present to his understanding of modernity: "All this — philosophy as the problematization of a present, and as the questioning by the philosopher of this present to which he belongs and in relation to which he must situate himself — might well be said to characterize philosophy as the discourse of modernity on modernity."[75] Modernity is no longer defined in contrast to antiquity but in terms of a relation to its own present.[76] Foucault introduces genealogy as the appropriate methodology to understand and develop this problematic of modernity, not as a methodology to denounce it, as Habermas assumes.[77] The role of genealogy is to understand the forms of rationality in and through which modernity — that is, the present — has become problematized. Foucault's focus is thus the genealogy of modernity as a question about the present as, again, the object, context, and ground of philosophical reflection.

At the same time, Foucault's "presentism" does not imply "relativism," if that is taken to mean an a priori denial of universals. He argues that what we need to preserve of the Enlightenment are not its universals, as Habermas believes, but "the very question of that event and its meaning (the question of the historicity of thinking about *the universal*) that must now be kept present in our minds as

what must be thought."[78] Foucault thus defines critical thinking as questioning what is taken to be universal and necessary: "It is one of my targets to show people that a lot of things that are a part of their landscape — that people think are universal — are the result of some very precise historical changes. All my analyses are against the idea of universal necessities in human existence."[79] That is, universals, like subjectivity and reason, must be understood in terms of the defining characteristic of the Enlightenment — historicity; in fact, the historicity of universals is for Foucault a consequence of the historicity of subjectivity and reason. One of the major tasks of critique in this context is the investigation of alleged universals, which involves relating them to the other forms of historicity. For example, when Foucault criticizes humanism, his point is not to reject all its principles but rather to challenge humanism's claim to universality, that is, to unmask its self-understanding as an ahistorical phenomenon: "What I am afraid of about humanism is that it presents a certain form of our ethics as a universal model for any kind of freedom. I think there are more secrets, more possible freedoms, and more inventions in our future than we can imagine in humanism" (*DP,* 15). So when he traces humanism back to its historical origin in a set of discursive practices and power relations, his purpose is to understand how the present forms of humanism have become what they are today, which in turn allows us to explore alternative forms for the future. He does this much the way Habermas retraces "the path of the philosophical discourse of modernity back to its starting-point — in order to examine once again the directions once suggested at the chief crossroads" (*PDM,* 295). This is not relativism but historical argumentation and critique.

Why, however, does Foucault always challenge universals? The reason, according to Gilles Deleuze, is that universals explain nothing because they too are historical; rather, they are what is in need of explanation.[80] Within the context of social institutions or systems (apparatuses), universals (such as freedom) are coordinates or variables "which have no meaning other than to make possible the estimation of a continuous variation."[81] They signify a historical process: "each apparatus is a multiplicity in which operate processes of this nature still in formation, distinct from those operating in another."[82] Thus, what Foucault specifically rejects about universals is only the

ahistorical status traditionally given to them, while he acknowledges universals construed in the Deleuzian fashion as variables within history, which means that it is the *necessity* of the universals which he challenges, not their universality per se.

Foucault's understanding of universals as variables does not mean, as Habermas might retort, that he is therefore committed to a different form of relativism, namely, the view that all forms of knowledge and rationality are equal (if only because they are equally subjected to power relations). For there are criteria in local critique for making judgments about different universals (as historical variables) and different forms of rationality. The criteria are internal to the historical framework of modernity, as, for example, when Foucault makes judgments about the different penal technologies available at the end of the eighteenth century. He did indeed describe torture scenes in *Discipline and Punish,* and they do tend to inspire outrage in the contemporary reader (*DP,* 3–7). But Foucault is not simply trying to get us to feel outraged, nor is he trying to be neutral.[83] Rather, he is analyzing three technologies of punishment — symbolized by the tortured body, the soul with its manipulated representations, and the body subjected to training (*DP,* 130–131) — that began to compete with one another within a common historical framework at the end of the eighteenth century:[84]

> The ceremony of public torture isn't in itself more irrational than imprisonment in a cell; but it's irrational in terms of a type of penal practice which involves new ways of envisaging the effects to be produced by the penalty imposed, new ways of calculating its utility, justifying it, graduating it, etc. One isn't assessing things in terms of an absolute against which they could be evaluated as constituting more or less perfect forms of rationality, but rather examining how forms of rationality inscribe themselves in practices or systems of practices, and what role they play within them, because it's true that "practices" don't exist without a certain regime of rationality.[85]

Any moral judgments the reader makes of public torture will, first, be in comparison to imprisonment in a cell (or to some other technique of punishment) and, second, follow rather than precede the inscription of the respective technologies into practices. That is, public torture of criminals was not opposed on the basis of a universal ethical-political principle proposed by humanism, but because it became dangerous for the sovereign once he could no longer control

the people as they began to protest the tortures (*DP,* 59–65, 73). That is, the sovereign put an end to them to preserve his already diminishing power, the same power that the public executions had once enhanced. The humanist objection to executions was "added" later in the sense in which Nietzsche says that justifications are added on (as lies).

Thus, Foucault's judgments about the comparative effectiveness of penal technologies have to be seen in terms of the context in which the technologies were competing: the transitional, historical context of early modernity (defined by the French Revolution, as well as by the local impact of the emergence of nation-states, democracy, and capitalism). In this context, it is not problematic for him to say that the prison was more effective than the sovereign model, since the model of punishment centered on the sovereign was clearly breaking down as the sovereigns were losing their heads. The second type of penal technology, introduced by the reform movement, tried to rationalize the system of punishment left over from the sovereign model (*DP,* 78–79, 87–89). If the prison proved more effective than those reforms, it was again for reasons internal to the transitional period within which the two models were competing. And if the competition for supremacy between these different technologies involved the increase of power, it had to do with the entrenchment of the emerging bourgeois power, which presupposed not some transhistorical process but the burgeoning social structure of modern law. Thus, none of Foucault's evaluative judgments, whether right or not, presupposes either a transhistorical process of the augmentation of social power or universal principles.

Of course, the last few points may seem to represent precisely the relativism Habermas attributes to Foucault. He could hardly be a relativist, however, unless something like the opposite of relativism — absolutism? — were firmly established; that is, insofar as relativism is understood as the denial of absolute or a priori truths, it cannot be a threat unless some such truths exist. The matter is not so simple, however. For Habermas himself acknowledges that the "idealizing presuppositions" of communicative action which are constitutive of modernity — the conditions of symmetry and reciprocity inherent in the mutual recognition of validity claims — emerged at a specific time in history and are thus not a priori.[86] In addition, he argues that

our rational reconstructions of these presuppositions, which are themselves unavoidable, are fallible. Yet he also argues that, although these presuppositions are historical and thus context-dependent, their validity is not context-bound: "these validity claims have a Janus face: As claims they transcend any local context; at the same time, they have to be raised here and now and be de facto recognized if they are going to bear the agreement of interactive participants that is needed for effective cooperation. The transcendental moment of *universal* validity bursts every provinciality asunder" (*PDM,* 322).[87] The presuppositions of modernity are historical in origin, our reconstructions of them are fallible, yet their validity is transcendent. This is also true of modernity as a whole; although it arose only a few hundred years ago, it is not merely one of many historical traditions which we can voluntarily adopt or discard; modernity, too, is universal and thus irreversible, intractable, unavoidable.

How could we modernists ever know whether there are principles whose significance is universal, especially since "universal significance" here seems to mean "significance beyond modernity," even when it is applied to modernity itself? How could we possibly justify such universality? According to Foucault, the transcendence Habermas speaks of is not something about which we could ever have any epistemological assurance so long as our reason is historical, for the historicity of subjectivity and reason places ontological limits on our ability to have such knowledge. Foucault would therefore challenge Habermas's recent attempt to restore constancy to universals by grounding them in the argumentative procedures implicit in communicative action, that is, action oriented toward understanding. Such grounding (in the sense of "giving reasons for") is certainly different from the attempt to ground universals in self-consciousness (in a transcendental sense), as was the case in the old paradigm of the philosophy of the subject, which Foucault and Habermas jointly reject; but it is nonetheless similar in trying to make universals that have emerged in history less vulnerable to historicity.

Habermas replies, as he did in his debate with Hans-Georg Gadamer, by seeming to concede the ontological point about the historicity of subjectivity and reason and the contingency of history, while shifting the focus to the epistemological point that the validity of

certain norms is not bound by those ontological constraints, for instance by the ontology of power in Foucault's case. Although the contingency of history (and of subjectivity and reason) does indeed limit the necessity (logical or historical) of universals, it affects only their status. Habermas therefore refers to universals as "stand-ins" (and even describes modern philosophy itself as a "stand-in"), emphasizing that universals are subject to revision.[88] That is, philosophy raises universals as hypotheses to be confirmed or not by (the logic of) historical developments. In short, Habermas's universals are "strong [i.e., universal] propositions with weak [i.e., fallibilist] status claims" (*PDM,* 409 n. 28).

While emphasizing more and more the fallibility of philosophical discourse even when it makes universal claims, Habermas simultaneously defends the self-corrective powers of universal philosophical discourse. He understands the self-referentiality of critique in terms of this self-corrective power, in the sense that when critique turns on itself it is capable of self-correction, self-transformation. As we saw earlier, Habermas argues that Foucault's discourse lacks this power, which means that when it is self-referential it collapses rather than corrects and transforms itself. It seems to me, however, that Foucault's discourse has just as much self-corrective power as Habermas's, perhaps more because Foucault has had more experience with it, since he was committed to fallibilism from his first text whereas Habermas is a relative newcomer to it.

With this last point, it is beginning to seem that the more Foucault's and Habermas's respective positions on the issue of universals are clarified, the less they differ: Foucault says universals are variables that must be criticized constantly, while Habermas calls them stand-ins that are revisable. There is a real difference, however, at least so long as Habermas continues to explore strategies to articulate and justify the "moment of *unconditionality*" built into actual processes of mutual understanding (*PDM,* 322), and so long as Foucaultians question the possibility of such unconditionality. Habermas pursues these strategies because he believes that universal norms are necessary for critique in all the modern discursive and concrete practices, whereas Foucaultians practice critique successfully with universals as variables.

IV Conclusion

I have argued elsewhere that Habermas's strategies for justifying the universality of the normative presuppositions of the philosophical discourse of modernity are unconvincing so far.[89] Foucault, in turn, provides powerful evidence for the conclusion that such strategies will never succeed. But such a conclusion is, of course, constrained by the same ontological conditions that limit Habermas. It thus seems that this issue — of the possible transhistorical significance of historical validity claims — is indeterminate, for the time being at least. Although Habermas may think this indeterminacy buys time for his position by putting the onus of proof on those who deny transhistorical validity and universality, I think it works in Foucault's favor instead; for he works with the correlation between knowledge and power and between critique and power, whereas Habermas insists on their separation without being able to defend it successfully, since what he defends analytically can so far not be found empirically. Foucault can practice critique now, while Habermas must wait (or else operate with counterfactuals).

Habermas might reply that the context-dependent/context-bound distinction, which he recognizes as a version of the materialism/idealism duality (*PDM,* 321), is a characteristic of language. In making such a countermove, however, he must rely on his own ontological claims about reason — for example, that reason "is by its very nature incarnated in contexts of communicative action" (*PDM,* 322). If Habermas does pursues this strategy, however, it becomes clear that he does not concede Foucault's ontology and then draw different epistemological conclusions from it, as he appeared to do above; rather, he challenges Foucault with an alternative ontology. Since this ontology must be justified, Habermas cannot shift the onus of proof to the opponents of universality after all.

The status of universals is thus a fundamental issue between Foucault and Habermas, though it is not one that is adequately described by the terms 'relativism' and 'absolutism', since Foucault is not a relativist and Habermas is not an absolutist. And it will certainly remain a major difference between their respective paradigms of critique, because the issue itself stems from the self-referentiality of modern critique: Must the general principles introduced *within* mod-

ernity as normative criteria *of* modernity have significance that extends *beyond* modernity? Habermas continues to say "yes," insisting that his universals are necessary for critique: "The concept of a communicative reason that transcends subject-centered reason . . . is intended to lead away from the paradoxes . . . of a self-referential critique of reason" (*PDM,* 341). Foucault answers "no," maintaining that the appeal to communicative action only exacerbates the problem and that his own universals are sufficient: "The problem is not of trying to dissolve them [relations of power] in the utopia of a perfectly transparent communication, but to give oneself the rules of law, the techniques of management, and also the ethics, the *ethos,* the practices of the self, which would allow these games of power to be played with a minimum of domination."[90]

Despite this fundamental difference, I hope to have shown that Foucault and Habermas share the project of modern, self-referential critique. Without claiming that they are saying the same thing, I also hope to have recast their debate about critique and power; without such recasting the debate will remain prematurely closed off by misunderstandings and ambiguities. Perhaps future discussions of Foucault's and Habermas's paradigms of critique can focus on the appropriate ways to carry out their common project while recognizing their distinct yet correlative strategies.

Notes

1. Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures,* trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), 286; cf. 276–286 (hereafter *PDM*). See the two chapters on Foucault from *PDM* reprinted above. Cf. also Dominique Janicaud, "Rationality, Force, and Power: Foucault and Habermas's Criticisms," in *Michel Foucault: Philosopher,* ed. Thomas J. Armstrong (New York: Routledge, 1992), 283–302, where he argues that Habermas's criticisms are "the same criticism shifted from the point of view of signification to that of truth and then value" (291).

2. Foucault claims that the term 'power' is short for "relationships of power," so that is how it should be understood here ("The Ethic of Care for the Self as a Practice of Freedom," in *The Final Foucault,* ed. James Bernauer and David Rasmussen [Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988], 11). Cf. "Clarifications on the Question of Power," in *Foucault Live,* ed. Sylvère Lotringer, trans. John Johnston (New York: Semiotext(e), 1989), 185.

3. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison,* trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon, 1978). Hereafter *DP.*

4. Habermas includes the following works by Foucault: *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason,* trans. Richard Howard (New York: Pantheon, 1965); *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception,* trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon, 1973); and *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Pantheon, 1971). Also included in Habermas's analysis is *The History of Sexuality: Volume I: An Introduction,* trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1978); but the subsequent volumes of *The History of Sexuality— Volume II: The Use of Pleasure,* trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1985); and *Volume II: The Care of the Self,* trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1986) — had not been published yet when *PDM* was written.

Cf. Axel Honneth, *Critique of Power: Reflective Stages in a Critical Social Theory,* trans. Kenneth Baynes (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), chaps. 4–6. Chap. 6 is reprinted in this volume.

5. Foucault discusses the three axes of knowledge, power, and self in "The Art of Telling the Truth," in Michel Foucault, *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977–1984,* ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman, trans. Alan Sheridan et al. (New York: Routledge, 1988) [this interview is reprinted in this volume]; and in *The Use of Pleasure,* 3–13, esp. 4–6; in "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress," in *The Foucault Reader,* ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 351–352; and in "Truth, Power, Self: An Interview with Michel Foucault, October 25, 1982," in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault,* ed. Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, and Patrick Hutton (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 9–15, esp. 15.

6. In the French original, this second statement is actually a footnote at the very end of the text; in the English translation, however, it appears as the final paragraph of the text.

7. Though the issue here is not a quantifiable one, it is true that Parts 1, 2, and 4 of *Discipline and Punish* ("Torture," "Punishment," and "Prison") are all primarily about the prison and together they constitute 212 out of a total of 308 pages; while Part 2 ("Discipline"), the more general section, is only 96 pages long.

8. It is also the case that when Foucault does discuss the carceral society he is not talking only about how the penitentiary techniques are used in other institutions, but about how the prison itself is an amalgam of many other institutions: "The carceral society has recourse to three great schemata: the politico-moral schema of individual isolation and hierarchy; the economic model of force applied to compulsory work; the technico-medical model of cure and normalization. The cell, the workshop, the hospital" (*DP,* 248).

9. Cf. Michel Foucault, *Remarks on Marx: Conversations with Duccio Trombadori,* trans. R. J. Goldstein and J. Cascaito (New York: Semiotext(e), 1991), 37, 167.

10. Foucault, "Question of Power," 183.

11. Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," *October* 59 (Winter 1991): 3–7.

12. Michel Foucault, "The Eye of Power," in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977,* ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, and Kate Soper (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 146–147, 155; and "Questions on Geography," in ibid., 71–72.

13. Cf. François Ewald, "A Power without an Exterior," in Armstrong, *Michel Foucault: Philosopher,* 169–175, esp. 169–170.

14. Foucault, "Eye of Power," 148: "It would be wrong to say that the principle of visibility [panopticon] governs all technologies of power since the nineteenth century"; cf. also 155. See also Michel Foucault, *Remarks on Marx,* 170: "I have never held that a mechanism of power is sufficient to characterize a society."

15. Jana Sawicki, "Feminism and the Power of Foucauldian Discourse," in *After Foucault: Humanistic Knowledge, Postmodern Challenges,* ed. Jonathan Arac (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988), 169. Cf. her article in this volume, and her *Disciplining Foucault: Feminism, Power and the Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991).

It often seems to me that it is those who take Foucault's rhetoric most seriously who tend to take his philosophy less seriously, believing that all he offers is rhetoric. There are those, however, who defend Foucault by emphasizing his rhetoric; see Tom Keenan, "The 'Paradox' of Knowledge and Power: Reading Foucault on a Bias," *Political Theory* 15 (February 1987): 5–37; and Daniel T. O'Hara, "What Was Foucault?" in Arac, *After Foucault,* 71–96. Both authors run the risk, I think, of removing Foucault from the playing field of philosophical discourse, which is to fall into his critics' hands.

16. Foucault, *Remarks on Marx,* 167; cf. 37.

17. Foucault writes, "I have never been a Freudian, I have never been a Marxist and I have never been a structuralist" ("Critical Theory/Intellectual History," in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture,* 22; reprinted in this volume).

18. On Foucault's relationship to Kant, see Foucault, "Telling the Truth." For more on Foucault's relationship to Nietzsche, see "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice,* ed. Donald Bouchard, trans. Donald Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 139–164; plus Foucault, *Politics, Philosophy, Culture,* 8, 23, 24, 31, 32, 33, 48, 250, 312.

While most critics of Foucault argue that his problems stem from his allegiance to Nietzsche, at least one argues that they stem from his break from Nietzsche;

see Christian Bouchindhomme, "Foucault, Morality and Criticism," in Armstrong, *Michel Foucault;* 317–327.

19. Jean Hyppolite commented in 1961 that Foucault's introduction to his translation of Kant's *Anthropology,* which he never published, sounded more like Nietzsche than Kant; quoted in Didier Erebon, *Michel Foucault,* trans. Betsy Wing (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 114; cf. 156–157.

20. Foucault, "Critical Theory/Intellectual History," 30.

21. Ibid., 25.

22. Ibid., 35. Cf. Gilles Deleuze, "What Is a Dispositif?" in Armstrong, *Michel Foucault,* 162, where he argues that Foucault "does not admit of universals of catastrophe in which reason becomes alienated and collapses once and for all."

23. Quoted by Maurice Blanchot in *Foucault/Blanchot,* trans. Jeffrey Mehlman (New York: Zone, 1987), 81. Or as Blanchot expresses it himself: "What threatens us, as well as what serves us, is less reason than the various forms of rationality, an accelerated accumulation of rational apparatuses, logical vertigo of rationalizations, which are at work and in use as much in the penal system as in the medical system or even the school system" ("Michel Foucault as I Imagine Him," in *Foucault/Blanchot,* 80–81; cf. p. 90).

24. Cf. Foucault, "Critical Theory/Intellectual History," 26: "Nothing hides the fact of a problem in common better than two similar ways of approaching it."

25. Ibid., 37.

26. Michel Foucault, "Politics and Reason," in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture,* 83.

27. Foucault, "Critical Theory/Intellectual History," 36. Cf. "What is Enlightenment?" in *Foucault Reader,* 10.

28. Foucault, "Question of Power," 189.

29. Cf. Michel Foucault, "The Discourse on Language," in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 231–233, where Foucault distinguishes between critical and genealogical analyses. Elsewhere, he says that the genealogy of psychiatry should not have been understood as *anti*psychiatry ("The History of Sexuality," in Foucault, *Power/Knowledge,* 192; cf. "Truth and Power," in *Power/Knowledge,* 109). Finally, on the relationship between critique and transformation, see "Practicing Criticism," in Foucault, *Politics, Philosophy, Culture,* 154–155, 14, 36.

30. Cf. Jürgen Habermas, "Further Reflections on the Public Sphere," trans. Thomas Burger, and "Concluding Remarks," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere,* ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 429, 467, 478–479, where

Habermas argues that Foucault's discourse is not self-corrective. And cf. section 3 below.

31. "Two Lectures," in Foucault, *Power/Knowledge,* 102. For a discussion of the notion of "apparatus" or *dispositif,* see "The Confession of the Flesh," also in *Power/Knowledge,* 194–198; and Deleuze's "What is a Dispositif?" 165–172.

For this same distinction, see also *DP,* 26–28, 176–177. And cf. "The Subject and Power," in Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 208–226; cf. 130, where Dreyfus and Rabinow contrast Foucault's and Habermas's views on the notion of juridico-discursive power.

32. Jana Sawicki, "Foucault and Feminism: Toward a Politics of Difference," in *Feminist Interpretations and Political Theory,* ed. Mary Lyndon Shanley and Carole Pateman (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 220–221.

33. Foucault, "Critical Theory/Intellectual History," 39. Cf. "The History of Sexuality," 183–184.

34. Sawicki, "Foucault and Feminism," 220. And cf. Foucault, "Truth and Power," 122, and "The History of Sexuality," 187–188.

35. In "History of Sexuality," 190, Foucault uses the juridical/disciplinary power distinction to criticize the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* for still being held captive by the juridical model, and to explain the long silence between the first and second volumes of *The History of Sexuality:* "I had to make a complete reversal of direction." On the notion of "problematize," see Foucault, *Use of Pleasure,* 3–32.

36. Foucault, *Use of Pleasure,* 13; cf. 10, 26, 18–30, 250, 252–253, for evidence that Foucault was explicitly developing a nonjuridical model of ethics; and cf. "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress," in *The Foucault Reader,* 340–372, esp. 352.

37. Arnold Davidson, "Archaeology, Genealogy, Ethics," in *Foucault: A Critical Reader,* ed. David Couzens Hoy (New York: Blackwell, 1986), 221–233, esp. 228.

38. Foucault, "Truth and Power," 121. And cf. *DP,* 208, where he uses the metaphor of the body of the king as the opposite extreme of the new physics of power.

39. Cf. Foucault, "Politics and Reason," 57–85, where he discusses two forms of power — political and pastoral — in relation to the state. Cf. also his "Governmentality," in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, eds. *The Foucault Effect* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 87–104.

40. Cf. Hoy, "Introduction," in *Foucault: A Critical Reader,* 14, where he argues that Foucault could not engage in a total critique of reason without some form

of holism, which he rejects. In general, Hoy gives a clear account of the many objections to Foucault in this collection (by Habermas, Michael Walzer, Charles Taylor, Richard Rorty, and others), as well as of various strategies to respond to them (by Hoy, Dreyfus and Rabinow, Arnold Davidson, Ian Hacking, and others).

41. On François Ewald's interpretation of Foucault, the opposition here is less between the juridical and the disciplinary than between the juridical and the successor of the disciplinary which he calls the normative; see "Norms, Discipline, and the Law," *Representations* 30 (Spring 1990): 138–161.

42. Cf. *DP,* 222–223, where Foucault characterizes the relationship between the two types of power in different ways: disciplinary power is the dark side of, the foundation of, and in opposition to, juridical power.

43. Cf. Foucault, *Birth of the Clinic,* xv, where Foucault speaks constructively about the "concrete a priori" of modern medicine: its historical possibility, domain of experience, and structure of rationality.

44. Foucault, *Birth of the Clinic,* xix; Foucault, "History of Sexuality," 192.

45. Foucault, "Two Lectures," 93. Cf. Habermas, "Taking Aim at the Heart of the Present," in his *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historians' Debate,* trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), 178–179, where he argues that power undermines the "normative yardsticks" of the analytics of truth. This article is reprinted in this volume.

46. Foucault, "Critical Theory/Intellectual History," 43.

47. That is, if one were to replace "knowledge" with "critique" in the last quote above, it would clarify the relationship in Foucault between critique and power. Cf. Foucault, "Ethic of Care," 18.

48. Foucault's work in this period, included two key essays, "The Discourse of Language" and "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," as well as two major texts, *Discipline and Punish* and volume 1 of *The History of Sexuality.* In this same period he also published the second, revised edition of *The Birth of the Clinic* (which is the basis of the English translation), plus the first preface to *Madness and Civilization* (included in the English translation).

Deleuze points out in *Foucault,* trans. Sean Hand (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1988), 26, that there are two distinct senses of "local" in Foucault: "Power is local because it is never global, but it is not local or localized because it is diffuse." It is the latter sense to which critics such as Habermas object, in part because an unlocalized power is hard to resist. But that hardly constitutes an objection against the notion of such power if there is evidence that it exists, which is Foucault's argument in *DP.* As we will see, he does deal with the problem of resistance.

49. Foucault, "Two Lectures," 81–82.

50. Foucault distinguishes archaeology from genealogy: archaeology is the appropriate methodology of the "analysis of local discursivities," while genealogy is "the tactics whereby, on the basis of the descriptions of these local discursivities, the subjected knowledges which were thus released would be brought into play" ("Two Lectures," 85). I will not be discussing Foucault's archaeology here because genealogy was the primary methodological issue in his debate with Habermas (though cf. *PDM,* 248).

51. Foucault, "Two Lectures," 83.

52. Ibid., 85.

53. Michael Kelly and Ricardo Sanchez, "The Space of the Ethical Practice of Emergency Medicine," in *Science in Context,* 4 (Spring 1991): 79–100. This example is particularly appropriate, I think, because medicine is such an important topic in Foucault's work. Cf., of course, *Birth of the Clinic;* but also "Politics and the Study of Discourse," in Burchell, Gordon, and Miller, *Foucault Effect,* 53–72, esp. 65–66, where Foucault discusses "the formation of clinical discourse characteristic of medicine roughly from the early nineteenth to the present" in relation to the problem of critique.

54. Foucault, *Birth of the Clinic,* xix.

55. Foucault, "Politics and Reason," 84.

56. For a critique of Foucault for not having a clear notion of resistance, see Thomas Wartenberg's *The Forms of Power: From Domination to Transformation* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), esp. 168.

57. Cf. Foucault, "Politics and the Study of Discourse."

58. Foucault, "Ethic of Care," 12; and "Politics and Reason," 84.

59. Sawicki, "Foucault and Feminism," 223.

60. Foucault, "Subject and Power," 221. I think that this point, along with the points made earlier about critique and transformation, show that Foucault is not the only skeptic John Rajchman interprets him to be in *Foucault: The Philosophy of Freedom* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), and *Truth and Eros: Foucault, Lacan, and the Question of Ethics* (New York: Routledge, 1991).

61. Foucault, "Ethic of Care," 4.

62. Ian Hacking, "Self-Improvement," in Hoy, *Foucault,* 239. Cf. Albrecht Wellmer, *The Persistence of Modernity: Essays on Aesthetics, Ethics, and Postmodernism,* trans. David Midgley (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), where he argues, against Kant and Habermas, that freedom is not a fact of reason but a fact of life under the conditions of reason.

63. Michel Foucault, "Questions of Method," in Burchell, Gordon, and Miller, *Foucault Effect,* 84. Cf. Erebon's *Michel Foucault,* 237, where Foucault is quoted as saying that his books are like tool boxes for people to open up and use "in order to short circuit or disqualify systems of power."

64. For evidence that Habermas was aware of his problem with the self-referentiality of critique in modernity, see *PDM,* chap. 12, "The Normative Content of Modernity," 336–367; cf. also *PDM,* 341, 408 n. 28. And cf. especially "Further Reflections on the Public Sphere" and "Concluding Remarks," where Habermas discusses this exact problem and specifically in relation to Foucault.

65. Cf. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, "What is Maturity? Habermas and Foucault on 'What is Enlightenment?'" in Hoy, *Foucault: A Critical Reader,* 109–121, where they argue that Foucault and Habermas both acknowledge that an understanding of critical reason is an essential task of contemporary philosophy, but they have incompatible notions of critique and reason.

66. Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" 42.

67. Cf. also *PDM,* 20–21, 41; and Jürgen Habermas, "Philosophy as Stand-In and Interpreter," in *After Philosophy: End or Transformation?* ed. Kenneth Baynes, James Bohman, and Thomas McCarthy (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), 298–299.

68. Foucault, "Telling the Truth," 94. Cf. the article by Thomas Wartenberg and James Schmidt in this volume.

69. Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" 39: "And by 'attitude,' I mean a mode of relating to contemporary reality; a voluntary choice made by certain people; in the end, a way of thinking and feeling; a way, too, of acting that at one and the same time marks a relation of belonging and presents itself as a task. A bit, no doubt, like what the Greeks called an *ethos.*"

70. Cf. the article by Thomas McCarthy in this volume, where he argues that Foucault fails to distinguish procedural from substantive ethical principles.

71. "Introduction" to Georges Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological,* trans. Carolyn Fawcett (in collaboration with Robert S. Cohen) (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 10.

72. Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" 38.

73. Foucault, "Telling the Truth," 88.

74. Ibid.

75. Ibid.

76. Cf. *DP,* 31, where Foucault uses the expression "history of the present" to talk about modernity. Cf. also "Governmentality," 87–104, where he also links

modernity and the present (1978) on p. 103. And cf. "Foucault Responds to Sartre," in *Foucault Live,* 39, where Foucault says (1968) that the task of philosophy is to diagnose the present.

77. Cf. David Couzens Hoy, "Foucault: Modern or Postmodern?" in Arac, *After Foucault,* 12–41, in which Hoy treats Foucault as a *post*modernist in order to defend him against Habermas. I do not think this strategy can work, for it is forced to accept the very interpretation of Foucault that forms the basis of Habermas's critique of him. Cf. Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" 39, where he rejects the terms "premodern" and "postmodern."

78. Foucault, "Telling the Truth," 94–95 (emphasis added).

79. Foucault, "Truth, Power, Self," 11. Cf. "What Is Enlightenment?" 45. According to Deleuze, "To think means" for Foucault "to be embedded in the present-time stratum that serves as a limit: what can I see and what can I say today? . . . Thought thinks its own history (the past), but in order to free itself from what it thinks (the present) and be able finally to 'think otherwise' (the future)" (*Foucault,* 119).

80. Deleuze, "What Is a Dispositif?" 168–169.

81. Ibid., 173.

82. Ibid., 168.

83. Cf. Richard Bernstein, "Foucault: Critique as a Philosophic Ethos," in *Zwischenbetrachtungen: Im Prozess der Aufklärung,* ed. A. Honneth, T. McCarthy, C. Offe, and A. Wellmer (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1989), 395–425, reprinted in this volume.

84. Cf. Adi Ophir, "The Semiotics of Power: Reading Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish,*" *Manuscrito* 12, no. 2 (1989): 9–34, where he argues that the three regimes of punishment are three orders of power relations co-related with three modes of signification, mark, sign, and trace, which are, in turn, parts of a single historical context. Foucault can thus make comparative judgments about them.

85. Foucault, "Questions of Method," 79.

86. On the point that moral universalism is a "historical result," see Jürgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action,* Christian Lenhardt and Shierry Weber Nicholsen, trans. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), 208.

87. Habermas's idea here is that context-dependent "ideas of truth and rightness nevertheless point toward a universal core of meaning" (*Jürgen Habermas: Autonomy and Solidarity: Interviews,* ed. Peter Dews [London: Verso, 1986], 164).

88. Cf. Habermas, "Philosophy as Stand-in." Cf. Habermas, *Autonomy and Solidarity,* 53, 132, 161.

89. Michael Kelly, "MacIntyre, Habermas, and Philosophical Ethics," in Michael Kelly, ed., *Hermeneutics and Critical Theory in Ethics and Politics* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), 70–93; and "The Gadamer/Habermas Debate Revisited: The Question of Ethics," in *Universalism vs. Communitarianism: Contemporary Debates in Ethics,* ed. David Rasmussen (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), 139–159.

90. Foucault "The Ethic of Care," 18.

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